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THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

IN

ITS ORGANISATION AND INSTITUTIONS



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GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

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ITS ORGANISATION AND INSTITUTIONS

BEING

*THE CROALL LECTURES FOR 1886*

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'A NEW THEORY OF KNOWING AND KNOWN,' ETC.

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## PREFACE

THE following Lectures were delivered in St. Andrew's Church, Edinburgh, in the months of January and February of the present year. They are designed to show how the Christian Church, from a very humble beginning, has grown to its present greatness; and how the Church of the nineteenth century, though not identical with the Church of the first, is continuous with it. Slow, gradual evolution has been going on everywhere and from the first, but operating in different directions, according to the surroundings. It is thus we account for the great variety of ecclesiastical forms now existing. It has, indeed, been held that the same laws of evolution which are visible in the animal and vegetable worlds do not hold in regard to institutions. No doubt there is a difference, but there is evolution in both, and environment has even a greater influence upon institutions than upon animal or vegetable organisms; and hence within a much shorter period there are

more and greater varieties in the one than in the other. In two thousand years Man himself has not been modified to any very perceptible extent, but his institutions have been modified almost beyond recognition.

The Christian Church, possessed of a divine life from its birth, answering to the needs of humanity, continually adapting itself to the social circumstances in which it was cast, or rather, from its plasticity, being moulded by them, not only survives, but flourishes in this age, so different from that in which it arose; and promises to live on, changed and changing, but still blessing and blessed. It is difficult to recognise the oneness of the Church of Ethiopia and the Church of England, but they have both issued from the same source, and are both continuous with the Church of the Apostles. The one has had an African environment and the other a European.

The lectures are mainly historical and not controversial. In a few cases I have come in contact with controversies, some of them happily dead, others unhappily still living; but I have endeavoured to deal with them in a historical spirit, and without asperity. To me their chief interest arose from their being instances of evolution, in some cases curiously abnormal instances.



Till quite recently ecclesiastical historians began with a perfect Apostolic Church, and traced its decadence downwards ; we now start from a Church with a grand faith and noble aspirations, but rudimentary, unorganised, incomplete, and mark with wonder the growth of its organisation and institutions. We thus reverse old-fashioned Church history, and may almost be said to read it backwards ; but, in doing so, we see progress and improvement in the past, and can therefore legitimately hope for their continuance in the time to come.

J. C.

MANSE OF CRIEFF, *February* 1886.



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## LECTURE I.

### DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH ORGANISATION.

THE first germ of the Church is to be found in the old Hebrew idea of a kingdom of God upon earth, a kingdom that was to absorb all other kingdoms, and endure for ever. Like other nations, the Hebrews, with their high poetic and religious temperament, had their visions and dreams of "a better time to come." Their bards and seers foretold such a time—such a golden age, and spoke of the coming of a Messiah—a God-anointed Redeemer, who was to bring it about. The idea was cherished by all pious and patriotic Jews through centuries, and in the times of their greatest national degradation it was most intense, for then they longed most earnestly for the coming of the Deliverer. It was especially intense during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. The Jews, notwithstanding repeated conquests, had never lost their love of religion, liberty, and national independence. They winced under the humiliation of their country; it was no longer a

theocratic kingdom, but only a Roman province, governed by a Roman procurator, taxed by Roman publicans. Accordingly, as might have been expected, several enthusiasts appeared claiming to be the expected Messiah, and brought terrible disaster upon themselves and their followers. Still the people believed that deliverance was not far off, that their eyes would see the salvation of God. When John the Baptist drew great crowds to see him and hear him, and when, in his wild eloquent way, he called upon the people to repent, as the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, he only gave utterance to the popular belief. When Jesus, after John's imprisonment, appeared in Galilee as a prophet, He took up the same refrain, so well understood, so firmly believed—the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And this formed the main burden of all His preaching.

But though Jesus seized upon an old idea, He expanded and elevated it. He raised it above the merely national and patriotic level. The divine kingdom He taught was to be a kingdom—a reign of goodness, righteousness, and truth. It was not to be founded upon force ; it was to have its seat and centre in the heart. It was not to consist in luxury and sensual indulgence, not in eating and drinking, but in the happiness which flows from a mind at peace. In all this Jesus evidently pointed not to an organised kingdom, but to a purified society—a society saved from sin, suffused by religion and morality. That

was Jesus' conception of a divine kingdom—the Kingdom of Heaven brought down to earth.

It is remarkable that Jesus never attempted to organise a religious community. He had His inner circle of personal friends, who were held together by their affection for Him and their faith in Him, and His outer circle of believers, who “thought it was He who would redeem Israel,” but He never gave them the cohesion of an association. His aim was to leaven all society with His spirit. He constantly spoke of a future in which this should be the case. The little leaven was to leaven the whole lump of dough. The little seed was to become the great tree, and overshadow all nations. He had unfaltering confidence in the effect of His teaching. But so long as He lived He let His teaching go forth in its nakedness, without the support of any organisation. Truth was truth, what was right was right, without an organisation as well as with it. And so it ever shall be.

On His death, His disciples, utterly disheartened, were dispersed, and it looked as if His whole life and lessons might be lost to the world for the want of apostles to publish them. But the rumour that He had risen from the dead—a rumour enthusiastically believed after a momentary doubt—brought the disciples together, and gave them new courage. They instantly declared their belief, proclaimed it everywhere, made it the chief theme of their preaching, and the belief spread. In a short time more

people believed in Christ, the crucified, the risen, the exalted, than had believed in Jesus of Nazareth, the wonder-worker and the prophet.

It is at this point we get the first historical notice that the converts were now beginning to consolidate into a society. It is said of them, "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers."<sup>1</sup> Here four things are noted. (1) The converts received instruction from the Apostles; (2) they lived in the Apostles' fellowship (*κοινωνία*), by which I understand is meant the Apostolic Communism explained in the verses following; (3) they were in the habit of meeting to eat the Lord's Supper, to break bread, as it is expressed; and (4) at their meetings they had prayers, liturgical or otherwise. This notice, short as it is, lets in a whole flood of light upon the Apostolic Church; and to some extent I shall follow its leading in my lectures.

"Church" it could scarcely yet be properly called, for it had little cohesion, no organisation, and no office-bearers. It will be my aim to show, first of all, how this loose mass by successive developments became a firmly-compacted and highly-organised body, with office-bearers of many grades. The old conception was that the Church sprang into existence full grown and full armed, like the fabled Minerva; that the Church of the Apostles was perfect in all its parts, and that

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 42. It will be observed that here and throughout I quote from the Revised Version.

according as modern churches approximated to this divine model they approached perfection. But the belief is now beginning to dawn upon men's minds that the constitution of the Church, like everything else, has grown, starting from very humble and rude beginnings, and gradually, under the operation of recognisable laws, accommodating itself to the needs of Christendom, acting upon the existing society and being acted upon in return. So it is with all institutions, human and divine. We would not go back to the Saxon Heptarchy to find the British Constitution in its completeness, though some of its first principles were already in existence, awaiting the further development of the future ; nor, in like manner, should we go back to the Apostolic or Patristic periods to find the Church in its greatest perfection.

Slow growth results in durability, and, generally speaking, the slower the growth the greater the durability. The strength of the British Constitution arises from its being a growth—the growth of twelve hundred years. The strength of the Church's Constitution arises in like manner from its being a growth—the growth of eighteen hundred years. Extemporised paper constitutions, like those which France has seen again and again, quickly perish. They cannot have the same adaptability, the same nicety of fit, as a constitution which has been shaped by circumstances, and which has grown with the

growth of a people. The Apostles, with divine wisdom, did not give the Church a paper constitution; had they done so it would undoubtedly have perished, and there would have been some danger of the Church perishing with it. They left the Church to frame its own constitution; to organise itself gradually in accordance with its own life-laws and the influence of its surroundings; to adapt itself to different climates and different times; and hence the Church is world-wide and endures still.

It is true the Church has broken up into many sections, and that difference of opinion as to ecclesiastical organisation has been one of the most common causes of breakage; but this was to be expected, and can scarcely be regarded as an evil, as it has made the one Church multiform and accommodated it to the differing opinions and tastes of different people. It was the necessary result of there being no authorised constitution. The same thing develops differently in different circumstances. All the variety of organised forms which we see in the world are said by Darwinians to be evolved from one common parent form. In like manner all the Churches of Christendom have been evolved from one common parent Church—the Church of the Apostles—a Church almost structureless, but with infinite possibilities, and destined to be the mother of all the Churches of the world. Had the old organisms had no capacity of change and of adapting themselves to new circum-



stances, they must have died out, and the world been left lifeless; and had the early Church organisation no power of change, of growth, of development, it must have died too, and the world been left religionless. It is the great law of adaptation which has prevented both these catastrophes.

It will be my endeavour to trace the stages of this process of development and adaptation. It will be found that there have been two factors at work throughout—the one working from within, the other from without. Christianity contains as part of itself certain beliefs which have necessarily influenced the forms and fortunes of the Church. Everything comes after its kind. The acorn becomes the oak and not the birch. The human embryo becomes the man. And so the foetal Christian meetings could develop only into a Christian Church. The teaching of Jesus necessarily continued as a great life-force in the community, shaping to some extent its organisation, its future doctrines, and its destiny. But the full action of this life-force was modified by the changing circumstances in which the Church was first cast, and in which it has continued ever since. “We are all the creatures of circumstances,” it has been said. The Church is as much the creature of circumstances as any individual member of it. It could not be otherwise: nor would it be desirable that it should be so. For while unfavourable surroundings have in many cases sadly damaged and degraded the Church, more

favourable surroundings in other places or at other times have repaired the evil; and if it were not for the action and reaction which go on between the Church and the outside world, the harmony between them would be lost and the Church become useless.

We shall first of all turn our attention to the organisation of the Church, and see how extensively the laws of development and adaptation have operated in this sphere.

The stages which I think may be noted are Individualism, Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, and Papalism. Individualism may be said to be the protoplasmic matter out of which the Church has sprung, and starting from this beginning, it has passed through the different stages of growth which I have here indicated.

1. INDIVIDUALISM.—There is nothing more clear than that our great Teacher makes religion a personal matter. He called men individually to repentance and reformation. Nothing could be done by delegation or substitution. Every one must work out his own salvation. During His lifetime, as I have already said, He never attempted to form His followers into a religious society. He was content if they received His maxims into their hearts, and acted them out in their lives. And even in the commission which He gave to His Apostles He instructed them merely to teach and baptize, and said nothing about forming the converts into a distinct community.



The teaching of the Apostles gives the same prominence to Individualism. Every man must bear his own burden, feel his own responsibility, and believe in his own heart if he would be saved. The Apostles acknowledge no sacerdotal caste : every Christian man is a priest, privileged to advance into the Holy of Holies. They know nothing of salvation through a Church channel. A man must be a Christian before he enters the Church ; it is not by entering the Church he will be made a Christian. Even in regard to difficult questions, about which there were differences of opinion, Paul only asks that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind. "To his own master," says he, "he standeth or falleth."<sup>1</sup>

The first beginnings of the Church agree with these ideas and illustrate them. From the time it was rumoured abroad that Christ had risen from the dead, His friends were accustomed to hold meetings on the first day of the week—probably after sunset on the Sabbath. It was very natural they should. Man is a social animal, and in a time of such intense excitement it was impossible they could refrain from meeting and interchanging their thoughts. They would also remember the promise of their Lord, that wherever two or three happened to meet, there He would be in the midst of them. That promise is, in truth, the Magna Charta of the Church. They had, moreover, His express commandment to meet and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv. 4.

partake together of a social supper, and thus keep the memory of Him fresh. But as yet there was no Church organisation, and no Church office-bearers, for even the Apostles could scarcely be regarded in that light. There was no such thing as "dispensing" the Sacrament, according to our mode of speaking. I might say there was no such thing as a Sacrament at all, according to our sense of the term. The disciples simply sat down to a common meal, and talked with one another of all that had been and might be, and mingled prayer with their talk. We are, therefore, entitled to hold that Churchism is not essential to Christianity. There were Christians before there was a Church; and it was the aggregation of these Christians which constituted the Church.

2. CONGREGATIONALISM.—In the natural development of the Church we pass from Individualism to Congregationalism. Individuals, having common beliefs and hopes and fears, could not meet often together without a tendency to solidify into a society. In all such cases certain individuals, from their social or personal qualities, acquire an influence over the rest, and become their leaders, and soon certain rules are accepted, tacitly or expressly, for the guidance of the whole. In the case before us, the Apostles naturally became the leaders of the company of Christians at Jerusalem, who were now, almost unconsciously to themselves, becoming a separate religious community. I say almost unconsciously, for

these Christians still frequented the Synagogue—still went up to the Temple to pray, and did not yet dream of forming a Church outside their ancestral one. But there are invisible laws in operation stronger than the intentions of men.

For a time this Christian society was very inchoate—almost as structureless as the first forms of animal organism. But it was part of their faith that they should partake of a common meal, and out of this arose the first necessity for organisation. The meal must be provided either by each bringing his contribution, or by the wealthier members furnishing the whole. The Divine Master had more than once recommended voluntary poverty—a doctrine known and practised among the Essenes. “Go,” said He to the rich young man, “sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.”<sup>1</sup> Some of the converts, full of the first enthusiasm of their faith, remembered this, and now acted upon it. “They sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as every man had need.”<sup>2</sup> “Neither was there among them any that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto each according as any one had need.”<sup>3</sup> “And all that believed were together, and had all things common.”<sup>4</sup> There was in fact a species

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xix. 21.    <sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 45.    <sup>3</sup> Acts iv. 34, 35.    <sup>4</sup> Acts ii. 44.

of Communism in the small Christian half-formed society at Jerusalem. Such a thing was possible in a small community—it was impossible in a large one, and accordingly, though carried, in a modified form, with Christianity to both Europe and Africa, it gradually died out. It left its vestige in such almsgiving and consideration for the poor as the world had never seen before.<sup>1</sup>

But here there was now a common fund, voluntarily contributed, for a common purpose, and that was enough to constitute the individual contributors and receivers into a society. It was entrusted to the Apostles—in Eastern phrase, it was laid at their feet—for other office-bearers the society as yet had none. But the Apostles failed to please all in their management. All who have to do with the care of the poor know the bitter jealousies which arise among them if they fancy their neighbour gets a larger dole than themselves. So it was among these first Christians, some of whom had probably been attracted to

<sup>1</sup> Justin, in his "Apology," chap. xiv., writing about 170 A.D., says—"We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock, and communicate to every one in need." This probably refers to the Church at Rome.

Tertullian, in his "Apologeticus," 39, writing about the year 200, says—"One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods with one another. All things are common among us but our wives." The first sentence here is undoubtedly true; the second is probably a rhetorical exaggeration; but here, in this African Church, we have a vestige of the primitive Jerusalem Communism, and after an interval of 150 years.

the society by its community of goods. The Hellenistic widows grumbled because they thought their Hebrew sisters in misfortune received a larger share than they did. Their complaints reached the ears of the Apostles, and led to the election of the seven deacons, as recorded in the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

According to the narrative these seven men were appointed to administer the funds of the Church, and especially to attend to the free tables which were laid out for the poor, that the Apostles, relieved of this burden, might apply themselves to their more proper work—"prayer and the ministry of the word."<sup>1</sup> It has been maintained by some that these seven men were the first presbyters and not the first deacons of the Church. But that opinion is in the teeth not only of the historical narrative but of the oldest traditions of the Church. It is true they are never called deacons in the Acts of the Apostles, but the cognate verb and noun *διακονεῖν* and *διακονία* are used. The complaint was, literally, that the Hellenistic widows were neglected in the daily "diaconia," and the Apostles declared that it was not fitting for them to leave the word of God and do the work of deacons or attendants at tables (*διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*),<sup>2</sup> and in this there seems to have been a flash of proper pride, as well as a proper sense of duty. Passing beyond the canonical books, Irenæus is the first ecclesiastical writer who

<sup>1</sup> Acts vi. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Acts vi. 2.

refers to the subject, and he identifies the deacons of his day with the deacons of the Acts. And the Church of Rome, however numerous its presbyters, has always restricted its deacons to seven, in memory of the original institution.<sup>1</sup>

These seven deacons, then, were the first office-bearers of the first Christian congregation of which we have any notice, if we regard the office of the Apostles as not local but world-wide. The fact is a staggering one to those who have exalted conceptions of ecclesiastical orders. For the work of these seven men was not to be spiritual but purely secular. It was to be the humble task of waiting at the free tables of the poor, and assigning to every one her mess of food. It was to listen to the murmurings and grumbings of the Hellenistic widows against their more favoured Hebraistic sisters, and if possible to pacify them.

But this is not all. It is clear that the election of these deacons was not contemplated till the need for them arose. It was the need for the office that created it. There is nothing inherently good or bad in the Church or out of the Church in having a com-

<sup>1</sup> This was remarked by the historian Sozomen, book vii. c. xix. "There are but seven deacons at Rome, answering precisely to the number ordained by the Apostles, of whom Stephen was the first martyr ; whereas in other churches the number is unlimited." The council of Neo-Cæsarea (about 314 A.D.) ordained that there should be but seven deacons in each city (canon 15), but this rule does not seem to have been acted on.



pany of serving-men; but where serving-men are needed, they should certainly be employed. That was the common-sense principle upon which the Apostles acted, when in the circumstances which had arisen, they recommended the Christian converts to elect seven men to minister to the poor. There seems, then, to be no other *jus divinum* attached to the office of the diaconate than this—that where deacons are wanted they ought to be created, and where they are not wanted they ought to be let alone.

The Apostles asked the community to elect the seven, and they did it. It was a concession of the principle that every society should choose its own office-bearers. The respect with which the Apostles were regarded, the influence which they no doubt had, did not prevent the people from exercising their right. But it has been said that though the congregation chose its own deacons, the Apostles ordained them. What of that? Ordination is simply a ceremony by which any man may be admitted to any office, civil or sacred. The important point is the election. If the man chosen is bad, no ceremony will make him good; if the man is good, it will hardly make him better. But to what work were these seven men set apart by prayer and the imposition of the Apostles' hands? Not to high spiritual work, according to our modern conceptions, but to the half-menial work of waiting upon the widows at their

common meals, and seeing there was no respect of persons,—very divine work, no doubt, in a sense, for it implied honesty, impartiality, and loving-kindness. But why prayer and the laying on of hands, it may be asked, if that was really all these deacons had to do? I reply, Why not? Prayer and the laying on of hands were not in those days restricted to what is now called the conferring of orders. Since the days of Jacob it was the natural way of conveying a blessing or even a good wish. And so in the case before us, when the seven men were chosen to wait at the free tables and see justice done, the Apostles laid their hands on them and prayed. By doing so they showed they had a true conception of what was right, and of what was needed for the organisation and growth of the Church.

But the controversy about these deacons is not yet done. We are reminded that two of them at least are mentioned as preaching and baptizing. Again I ask, Why not? Though the purpose for which they were specially elected and ordained may have been just as I have described it, and just as the author of the Acts has described it, why should they not preach and baptize if they had an opportunity of doing so? In the embryonic state of things then existing, it was no violation of Church order for any Christian man to preach and baptize. When many of the Christians fled from Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen, we are told “they went everywhere



preaching the word." Philip is merely signalised as having been more successful than the others. And what of baptism? Was it not merely the form by which any convert might receive any brother convert into the Christian society? It is ridiculous to think of ecclesiastical discipline and rigid rules in those days, as if œcumenical councils had already sat and framed a code of canon law. How could the Church have flourished as it did, if every man, however zealous, had been tongue-tied and hand-tied, and forbidden to speak or work for Christ till the Apostles had ordained him!

Thus individualism was still strong in the heart of this primitive congregationalism. We see the same thing at a later date and in the Corinthian Church, nearly a thousand miles away from Jerusalem, and, if not consisting of Greek converts, surrounded at least by a Greek atmosphere. Both the Epistles of Paul are addressed simply to the Church at Corinth, "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints," and office-bearers of any kind are never once mentioned. This is the more remarkable because there is reference made to the necessity for discipline, but the saints are recommended themselves to cast out the sinner. There is a reference to their weekly meetings, but there is no mention of any one presiding at them. On the contrary, all might prophesy, all might speak with tongues, any one might propose a hymn or discuss a doctrine. The Apostle only

stipulates that they should not all speak at once, but one by one. "Ye may all prophesy," he says, "one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted." There is reference also to collections for the saints, but they are asked to lay by themselves, not to give to the deacons, from which we may infer no deacons existed. "Upon the first day of the week," Paul writes, "let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come." <sup>1</sup>

Other allusions bear out the idea that the Church at Corinth was as yet almost structureless—little more than an aggregate of individuals—with no bishop, presbyter, or deacon. Paul, indeed, alludes frequently to the ministers of Christ, but it is to himself or his fellow-apostles he always refers.<sup>2</sup> He tells them he is coming to visit them. In his first Epistle he speaks of having sent Timothy to them to preserve them in their allegiance. "Be ye imitators of me,"<sup>3</sup> he says significantly. In the second he speaks of having sent Titus on a more secular errand, but he is to act as his deputy. It is clear, therefore, the Apostle wished no one to intervene between himself and the Corinthian Christians. It is true he speaks of spiritual gifts existing in the Church; but they

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

<sup>2</sup> "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed."—1 Cor. iii. 5. "Are they ministers of Christ? I more."—2 Cor. xi. 23. See also 1 Cor. iv. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 6; vi. 4.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 1.

were such gifts as might be possessed by any one. He only indicates that God did not give the same gifts to all—to one man he gave one special gift, to another a different one. It is true he also speaks of God as having set in the Church apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle-workers, healers, helpers, governors, linguists. But he makes it as clear as possible that there was this diversity of offices because there was a corresponding diversity of gifts, and that any one who possessed or thought he possessed the gift might exercise it in the Church, and was indeed bound to do so.<sup>1</sup> The possession of the gift was the only appointment and the only ordination, and beyond this all stood upon the same level. Only one other circumstance besides natural capacity is referred to as giving one man more influence than another in this fraternal church: it was the fact of having rendered some service to the saints. Stephanas and his family are referred to as having been the first converts, and as having devoted themselves to the ministry (*διακονία*) of the saints; and Paul beseeches the Corinthians to submit themselves to such (not to them specially, but to such) and “*to every one that helpeth in the work and laboureth.*”<sup>2</sup> Now if there were bishops, elders, or deacons in the Corinthian Church, why were the people not asked to submit themselves to them? Why should they simply be asked, in an indefinite way, to show

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xii.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16.

respect to all who worked hard in the common cause ? It is true the word “*diaconia*” is used with reference to Stephanas, but it is used equally with reference to the members of his household, and it will scarcely be maintained that they were officially the deacons of the Church. How marked the difference between these genuine Epistles of Paul and the epistles of the pseudo-Ignatius, where the one string continually harped upon is subjection to the bishop !

In the Epistle to the Galatians, which is probably of a still earlier date than those to the Corinthians, there is the same remarkable absence of any allusion to church organisation or church office-bearers. How are we to account for this ? If office-bearers had existed they must have been referred to. As they are not referred to we must conclude they did not exist. The same fact meets us when we turn to the Romans—another of the undoubted Epistles of the Apostle. From beginning to end there is not the slightest reference to any one who bore office in the Roman Church. He exhorts the Romans to be subject to the civil magistrate—why not to the ecclesiastical authorities, if ecclesiastical authorities there were ? He refers to differences of individual opinion about meats and sacred days, but he declares that such things must be left to the decision of the individual conscience. “Who art thou,” he exclaims, “that judgest the servant of another ? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Let each man be fully

assured in his own mind.”<sup>1</sup> There is mention indeed, in the 16th chapter, of a Phœbe, who is described as a servant or deaconess of the Church of Cenchrea;<sup>2</sup> but it is doubtful if “*diaconos*” is here used in its official meaning. There is mention also of many others who were earnest workers in the good cause. But none of them are spoken of as holding any position in the Church but what their zeal or success gave them. No doubt the early Apostolic Church abounded with such self-appointed and self-ordained teachers and preachers, each of whom energetically exercised the gift of which he supposed himself possessed.<sup>3</sup> Paul speaks with dismay as to the opinion an unbeliever would form of them if he came into one of their meetings and found them all speaking with tongues. He tells them frankly the stranger would think them mad.<sup>4</sup> And with evident sarcasm and a pardonable exaggeration, contrasting himself with the crowd of would-be teachers, he says — “Though ye should have ten thousand tutors

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xvi. 1. In Ephes. vi. 21, Tychicus is called a faithful *diaconos* in the Lord, but it does not appear to be meant in an official sense. In Col. iv. 17 there is a similar reference to the *diaconia* of Archippus.

<sup>3</sup> James, like Paul, felt it was necessary to repress these rhapsodists: “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation” (James iii. 1)—not very cheering for those who were ambitious of distinguishing themselves as teachers; for James’ meaning is, that those who set themselves up as teachers in the Church were necessarily subjected to the severest criticism.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

in Christ, yet have you not many fathers ; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.”<sup>1</sup> He wished to put down as far as he could the excessive outburst of spiritual gifts, as every prudent man tried to do in the Puritanic period when every drummer boy thought himself inspired to preach.

If, then, we take the Epistles of Paul as letting in the truest light on the state of the Pauline Churches, it would appear these churches were still without regularly ordained office-bearers, and almost without any organisation. They were like the *Amæba*—they had as much consistency as kept them together, and considerable power of movement, but they had no specialisation of function or structure—the lowest form of organised life. They were behind the Church at Jerusalem, which, not to speak of the Apostles, had at least its deacons, and its daily free table and its weekly commemorative meal.

At the time we speak of there was a considerable group of such churches scattered over Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. There were the Churches of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch, Thessalonica, Galatia, and many others, most of them small congregations meeting in private houses. It is absurd to suppose there

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 15. This is the text which Canon Liddon has chosen for his recent sermon on “A Father in Christ,” in which he insists that bishops have the special power of begetting spiritual children. It is evident, however, that Paul, by his bold figure, refers to the conversion of the Corinthians, and not to the ordination of their clergy, for clergy as yet they had none.



was as yet any polity which linked them to one another, or rendered them subordinate to a governing synod. Each was independent of every other, as, indeed, every member was independent of his neighbour, and had no superior to whom he must bow. Their common relationship to Paul was the only circumstance which gave them a kind of unity. He was in some respects their bishop, in the modern sense of that word, and there can be no doubt his letters were almost as valid as laws. Thus, then, in the bosom of this low type of Congregationalism there already existed the germ of a future Episcopacy.

Thus the first form of the Church was congregational, for every member took a part in its management, and every congregation was independent of every other, and was a complete Church in itself—the marks of Congregationalism at the present day. But we now begin to discern the germs of Presbyterianism.

3. PRESBYTERIANISM. — By Presbyterianism I mean simply Church government by presbyters. In tracing the development of species, we do not find that the lower form necessarily disappears as the higher form manifests itself, nor are we able always to show the steps by which the one merged into the other. There are always lost links. The same thing can be said of Church development. The first form of Presbyterianism was congregational.

It is curious we have no account of the first institution of presbyters in the Church. We have seen

the circumstances in which the diaconate arose, but neither in the Acts nor in any of the Epistles of any of the Apostles have we any hint as to how presbyters came first into the Christian organisation. But it is not difficult to fill up this historical gap. Every Jewish synagogue was managed by a body of presbyters (or elders). The Christians of Palestine do not seem at first to have contemplated any rupture with Judaism; and Judaism, notwithstanding its intolerance of polytheism, was liberal enough and wise enough to suffer widely-divergent sects within its own bosom. It gave shelter to both Pharisees and Sadducees. No Christian Church of the present day stretches its charity so far. Different races and different ranks of men, moreover, had each their own synagogue, where they might discuss religious questions from their own standpoint. Thus the Alexandrian Jews had a synagogue at Jerusalem, and if we may take Philo as a type of the Alexandrian Jew, they differed as widely from old-fashioned Judaism as the Christians did. What was more natural, then, than that the Christians should have their synagogue too? In Palestine the first Christian congregations were called synagogues,<sup>1</sup> and with the synagogue there

<sup>1</sup> James ii. 2; "Epiph." xxx. 18; Hier., Ep. cxii. 13. Lightfoot, "Dissertation on the Christian Ministry," attached to his "Philippians." He quotes the above authorities.

"When the majority of the members of a Jewish community," says Dr. Hatch, "were convinced that Jesus was the Christ, there was nothing to interrupt the current of their former common life. There



would come the synagogue office-bearers—the presbyters or elders—so intimately connected with the history of Jewish piety. This Hebrew model would naturally be copied by the Greek Christians, though they called their assemblies, not synagogues, but *ecclesiæ*.

It is quite possible the first presbyters had no formal appointment to their office. We have seen how in the earliest Pauline Churches every man exercised his gift as prophet, or teacher, or miracle-worker, or linguist, and received a kind of recognition from his fellow-Christians. The same circumstances would raise some men to the office of the eldership as the Church development went on. First, converts appear to have been held in special honour.<sup>1</sup> Those in whose houses the night assemblies were held would, as a matter of course, assume to some extent the management of these assemblies. Men of higher social rank, or more mental power, would assert the same supremacy then as they do now and always. These would become the first presbyters of the Church, perhaps without any formal appointment, for the modern theories of orders were then unknown. Archbishop Whately supposes that some of the earliest Christian Churches were *converted synagogues*, and that the working machinery of rulers and elders went on as before.<sup>2</sup>

was no need for secession, for schism, for a change in the organisation. The old form of worship and the old modes of government could still go on.” (“Organisation of the Early Christian Churches,” p. 60.)

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xvi. 5 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 15 ; Clemens Romanus, Ep., cap. xlii.

<sup>2</sup> “On the Kingdom of Christ,” Essay ii., p. 113.

The Jewish elders, we must remember, did not constitute a caste ; they followed their usual trades while they bore office in the synagogue. Thus, in these different ways, with the office there came the men to fill it. But when the office was thus instituted, and when it came to be regarded as a position of some little honour in the community, it would be necessary to have elections, and to designate the men chosen by some simple ceremony. The form then usual, where it was thought a blessing might be conveyed, was, as I have already said, prayer and the imposition of hands. It was imagined that by this form, or by breathing, a saintly spirit was conveyed, but it might be conveyed to the humblest member as well as to the elder.

The first mention which we have of presbyters is in the 11th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where we are told the Gentile Churches sent to the presbyters or elders a contribution to the famine fund in Judea. It is curious it should not have been sent to the deacons, but in truth deacons are never more mentioned in the book which records their appointment.<sup>1</sup> They do not seem to have ever got beyond settling the quarrels of the irritated widows. The presbyters now come to the front, and are constantly alluded to as having a part in the management of the churches. In the account of the synod held at Jerusalem to settle the disputes between the

<sup>1</sup> Philip is mentioned as having been one of the seven (Acts xxi. 8).

Jewish and Gentile Christians they are always associated with the Apostles. "The apostles and the elders," it is said, "were gathered together to consider of this matter." "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company and send them to Antioch." And the sentence of the synod ran in the name of the "apostles and the elder brethren."<sup>1</sup> Thus the elders assume importance at once, and the deacons have entirely disappeared. Perhaps their office was regarded as purely secular, and hence they are not here distinguished from the brethren; but the most probable explanation is that the synagogue system soon effaced every other in the East.

I have already noted that neither presbyters nor deacons are mentioned in the earlier Pauline Epistles; but in the later Epistles there is frequent reference to them, showing that the Jerusalem type of organisation had spread to the Gentile Churches. As time wore on and the first fever of the Christian enthusiasm abated, and the need for stated office-bearers began to be felt, the self-constituted prophets and linguists and miracle-workers recede into the background, and elders and deacons appear in the foreground. It was a necessary step in the growth of any society that was tending toward a higher organisation by means of greater specialisation of structure and function.

<sup>1</sup> Acts xv.

The Epistle to the Philippians is addressed "To the saints, with the bishops and deacons,"<sup>1</sup> a circumstance which indicates a higher organisation, and proves that there must have been a considerable interval of time between the date of this Epistle and those previously referred to. But it is in the Pastoral Epistles that the greatest prominence is given to the new officials. The character of the good bishop and the good deacon is sketched. Titus is reminded that he was left at Crete that he might appoint elders in every city;<sup>2</sup> and Timothy is warned not to neglect the gift which was given him "by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."<sup>3</sup>

Here then we have a distinctly different state of things from what existed at the date of the first Epistles, when everything was spontaneous, spasmodic, unrestrained, strong individual enthusiasm bursting out in every form, an Apostle striving from a distance to moderate the excesses of the too exuberant spirit, but without any help from subordinate officials. Now all this has been changed, and we have well-ordered congregations, with bishops and deacons managing their affairs.

But here I may be reminded I have introduced a new term. I have spoken of bishops. Whence came they and who were they? It is now admitted on all hands that bishop and presbyter are the two designa-

<sup>1</sup> Philip. i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Titus i. 5.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14.

tions of the same persons. The bishops were presbyters and the presbyters were bishops. The terms are used interchangeably in too many passages in the New Testament to admit of a doubt. Paul sends for the elders of Ephesus, and when they come he reminds them they are bishops.<sup>1</sup> Peter in his First Epistle instructs the elders to exercise their episcopate ungrudgingly.<sup>2</sup> The author of the Epistle to Titus instructs the young evangelist to appoint as elders men of blameless life, "for," says he, "a bishop must be blameless."<sup>3</sup> In both Philippians<sup>4</sup> and 1 Timothy<sup>5</sup> bishops and deacons are mentioned, but not presbyters, and yet it is impossible to conceive that presbyters are omitted, seeing they formed, as Bishop Lightfoot remarks, "the staple of the ministry," and were "absolutely essential to the Church."<sup>6</sup> The only conclusion we can come to is, they are referred to as bishops. In the earliest Patristic document—the Epistle of Clemens Romanus—the terms are still used in the same indiscriminate manner. Clemens knew no distinction between bishop and presbyter. If there was any difference of usage among Apostolic Christians it was simply in this—that "presbyter" was more in use among the Jewish converts as coming from the synagogue; "bishop" among the Greeks, as an appellation already well known to them, and

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 17, 28.<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter v. 1, 2.<sup>3</sup> Titus i. 5-7.<sup>4</sup> Philip. i. 1.<sup>5</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 1-13.<sup>6</sup> "On the Christian Ministry," *ut supra*.

frequently applied to the managers of their confraternities, burial societies, and financial associations.<sup>1</sup>

There was no difference then between the bishop and the presbyter. But it has been maintained by many Presbyterian writers that there were two grades of presbyters or elders—the teaching elder and the ruling elder. Calvin held this opinion, and where he led many were sure to follow. The theory rests entirely on 1 Timothy v. 17, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour (or double pay),<sup>2</sup> especially those who labour in the word and in teaching.” But it is clear nothing more is meant by the writer than that some of the primitive elders had no capacity for anything but managing the affairs of the little society over which they were set, while others, from better education or better intellect, were able to help in instructing the proselytes. All were to be honoured, but especially the last, as “aptness to teach” was almost a necessary qualification for the presbyterate. He is referring to natural gifts and not to official grades. But here we have probably the first step in the process which led to the separation of the presbyterate into presbyters and bishops.

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot on “Philippians” and “The Christian Ministry,” pp. 94, 192 ; Renan, “Les Apôtres,” “St. Paul ;” Hatch’s “Organisation of the Early Christian Churches,” Lecture ii.

<sup>2</sup> Τιμὴ—“pay”—seems the more correct translation, or there is no meaning in what follows—“*For*,” the Scripture saith, “thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the labourer is worthy of his hire.”—Verse 18.



We previously saw how seven deacons were chosen at Jerusalem to assist in distributing the funds of the society; but having been appointed they are never more mentioned in connection with the Jerusalem Church. But now we find deacons in the Gentile Churches—at Philippi and at Ephesus<sup>1</sup>—standing almost side by side with the bishops; and that though there was no communistic property. How came this about? Nothing more simple. It was very natural that the Gentile Christians, in their church organisation, should copy as far as possible the mother Church at Jerusalem. We know the deference which Paul paid it, although it was the centre of hostility to his teaching. We can understand, then, how they would reverence the office of the diaconate though there was no longer the same need for it. Its name indicated its flexibility and how it might be turned to any purpose in the service of the Church. Though there were no free tables at Philippi, or Colossæ, or Thessalonica, there were, no doubt, many poor to provide for in some way, for the Church had become the asylum of the poor and the oppressed. But in addition to this there was the Eucharistic feast to furnish and serve; and it is probable the portions not eaten were already carried to the sick, as we know they were in the days of Justin the martyr. The deacons had in fact become, in a general way, the assistants of the presbyters.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iii. They are not mentioned in Titus as existing in Crete.

Working hand in hand with the deacons there were now deaconesses, as we learn from the celebrated letter of Pliny to Trajan. The philosophical proconsul of Bithynia tells us that in order to get at the truth about the Christians he put to the torture *duæ ancillæ quæ ministræ dicebantur*. But indeed it seems certain that the "widows" of Timothy held some official position in the Church, and were the first deaconesses. The seclusion in which the women of the East lived made the office expedient, if not necessary.

At the period at which we have arrived, that is, towards the close of the Apostolic age, every Church had its college of presbyter-bishops, by whom its affairs were managed, and these were frequently assisted by a body of deacons and deaconesses. Communism had not died out, but in some places it had merged into a magnificent liberality. Broader views in regard to sacred days and places were becoming more common as the Greek element was becoming larger, and the Jews were beginning to rise above their prejudices.<sup>1</sup> The spontaneousness of the early societies had abated under official rule, but had not disappeared, and the people still had a voice in the election of their office-bearers and the management of their affairs. Every congregation was still independent of every other, and such congregations were now dotted over the map of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. What was the precise amount of authority exercised

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 16.



by the presbyter-bishops, and what the precise amount enjoyed by the people, it is impossible now to determine. It probably varied greatly, according as the presbyter-bishops were or were not masterful men. So things continued till the second century began. But we are now on the eve of a new development.

4. EPISCOPALIANISM.—We have seen how congregationalism outlived its original form and continued to exist during the whole of the Apostolic age, although the presbyterian development had begun. In like manner, we shall see that presbytery continued in its most essential features during the second century, though the episcopal development was now manifesting itself. At no period do we find any one of the rival polities altogether disentangled from the others.

By Episcopacy I do not mean government by bishops, for there were bishops from the beginning ; but a polity which insists upon the necessity of a threefold and three-graded ministry—bishops, presbyters, and deacons—and which assigns to bishops jurisdiction over presbyters and powers of ordination which presbyters do not possess.

With great candour, the Bishop of Durham, in his “Dissertation on the Christian Ministry,” acknowledges that while “at the close of the Apostolic age the two lower orders of the threefold ministry were widely and firmly established, the traces of the third and

highest order, the episcopate, properly so called, were few and indistinct.”<sup>1</sup>

Though it is now no longer disputed that the primitive bishop and presbyter were one and the same, it is by no means universally conceded, as it is here by Bishop Lightfoot, that presbytery was prior to episcopacy, that there was growth in the Church's organisation, as in everything else, and that in the process of this historical development the presbytery of the first century developed into the episcopacy of the second, and the episcopacy of the second into the more perfect episcopacy of the third and succeeding centuries. Unwilling to surrender an apostolic and even divine origin for the episcopal order, it is maintained by many that the predecessors of the modern prelates were not the apostolic bishops but the Apostles themselves. This opinion, though now more desperately clung to than formerly, as the only remaining plank which can float the *jus divinum* of episcopacy, is not new. Repudiated by the High Church Ignatius,<sup>2</sup> it was held by Theodoret;<sup>3</sup> rejected by Chillingworth and Stillingfleet, it was

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, “On the Christian Ministry,” p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> Ignatius, “Ep. to Trallians,” iii.—“Shall I reach such a height of self-esteem that, though being a condemned man, I should issue commands to you as if I were an apostle?” “Ep. to Romans,” iv.—“I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commands to you. They were apostles; I am but a condemned man.”

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret on Philip. ii. 25, where there is an obvious mistake as to the meaning of the passage.

held, in a modified form, by Hooker<sup>1</sup> and Bingham.<sup>2</sup>

It is not to be denied that the relation of Paul to the churches which he planted was not unlike that of a modern prelate to the churches of his diocese. He visited them as often as he could, he sent them letters giving them his opinion on any matters which were agitating them, he despatched deputies to assist in their management and organisation, and when, in his later years, bishops and deacons were ordained (if we are to maintain the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles) there can be no doubt these would render him a deference amounting to obedience.

But if this wide influence was possessed by Paul, it seems to have been the result of his personal ability, his catholic spirit and his ministerial success, rather than of anything else. The same thing happened in the case of the Abbot Columba and the Celtic Churches which he planted in Pictish Scotland. The same thing happens with the modern missionary who is

<sup>1</sup> "Such as deny apostles to have any successors at all in the office of their apostleship, may hold that opinion without any contradiction to this of ours, if they will explain themselves in declaring what truly and properly apostleship is. In some things any presbyter, in some things only bishops, in some things neither the one nor the other, are the apostles' successors." ("Eccles. Pol.," vii. § 4.)

<sup>2</sup> "The title of apostles, which, in a large and secondary sense, is thought by many to have been the original name for bishops. . . . Shortly after, the name of apostles was appropriated to such only as were apostles indeed. . . . Afterwards bishops thought it honour enough to be styled the apostles' successors."—Bingham, vol. i. book ii. chap. 2.

successful in establishing Christian communities in Caffraria or Bengal.

If the modern bishop is not the lineal descendant of the primitive bishop but of the Apostles, why does he not bear the apostolic name? The substitution of the lower name for the higher one must be accounted for. Churchmen are not accustomed to come down. The reasoning on this point of the late Bishop of Lincoln, in his "Theophilus Anglicanus," is scarcely worthy of his great name and place.<sup>1</sup> "Q. Whom do Bishops succeed and represent? A. The Holy Apostles. Q. Why, then, are they not called Apostles? A. Because, in the first age, the *name Apostle* described one who had been *personally* sent (*ἀποσταλείς*) by Christ Himself; it was therefore reserved to the Twelve originally appointed by Him when He was upon earth, and to St. Matthias, St. Paul, and St. Barnabas. . . . Q. The successors of the Apostles could not, then, it seems, take the name of Ἀπόστολος; but why did they assume that of Ἐπίσκοπος? A. Because none was more appropriate than *Episcopus*, on account of its signification, and because the term ἐπισκοπή had been already used in the Septuagint version of the Psalms to describe the Apostleship of Judas [surely this is an unfortunate allusion] to which St. Matthias succeeded; and because, in the Apostolic age Ἐπίσκοπος<sup>2</sup> was the name

<sup>1</sup> "Theophilus Anglicanus," pp. 89, 90.

<sup>2</sup> Πρεσβύτερος was equally "the name of the order immediately next in rank to that of the Apostles."

of the order immediately next in rank to that of the Apostles. Henceforth, then, 'Επίσκοπος was applied to an overlooker of (many) pastors, having previously signified in the Church an overlooker of a (single) flock."

Such are the answers which Theophilus Anglicanus gives to his questioner, and his questioner is obliged to be satisfied. I acknowledge I am not so. It seems to me that if it would have been wrong to have assumed the apostolic name, it must have been worse to claim the apostolic office; or contrariwise, that if any one did the apostolic work and possessed the apostolic power, he was well entitled to the apostolic name. Saul of Tarsus had enough to do to vindicate his title to the apostolate, amid the many gainsayers: while, on the other hand, two of the Apostles, Peter and John,<sup>1</sup> whose claim was undoubted, were content to take the name of presbyters. Had Bishop Wordsworth taken lower ground, and spoken of the superintendence of the Apostles as forecasting, and perhaps justifying, the future jurisdiction of the bishops, he would have been nearer the truth.

But it is necessary we should look more closely at this matter, more especially as some writers think that the very existence of the Church and the efficacy of its sacraments depend upon the apostolic descent

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter v. 1; 2 John i. 1; 3 John i. 1.

of its ministers.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, if bishops be the descendants of apostles, the law of evolution does not hold—there is deterioration and not development.<sup>2</sup>

As there cannot be a double episcopal descent, the theory of Theophilus Anglicanus, and of those who agree with him, amounts to an abandonment of the claim of modern bishops to be the successors of the New Testament bishops, and concedes that the modern presbyters are their only true successors and representatives. This is a great, and for an episcopalian, a dangerous concession. If it be said that prelates are descended from the Apostles, through the apostolic and sub-apostolic bishops, that is tantamount to conceding that they are connected with the Apostles through a presbyterian line, as it is conceded the apostolic and sub-apostolic bishops were simply presbyters called by another name.<sup>3</sup> When such writers

<sup>1</sup> This opinion is by no means extinct. Canon Liddon says, "The maintenance of such a barrier is more than intelligible, if we believe that upon a true episcopal succession depends the validity of the Eucharist—our chief means of communion with our Lord."—Sermon, "A Father in Christ," p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Baur is very decided in his opinion that the bishops were not the successors of the Apostles—"Wären die Bischöfe in dem Sinne Nachfolger der Apostel, in welchem die Kirkliche Tradition sie dafür hält, so wäre die Frage über der Ursprung des Episcopats sehr einfach zu beantworten, allein die Bischöfe sind in keinem Falle die unmittelbaren Nachfolger der Apostel, und älter als der ἐπίσκοπος im eigentlichen Sinne sind die πρεσβύτεροι und διάκονοι." (Kirchengeschichte der Drei Ersten Jahrhunderte. Band 1. Dritter Abschnitt.)

<sup>3</sup> I say not only *apostolic* but *sub-apostolic*, because it is not doubted by any modern critic of much authority, that the bishops of Clemens Romanus, and Hermas (not to mention the author of the Teaching



as Mr. Fynes Clinton<sup>1</sup> have, with infinite pains, endeavoured to trace a succession of ordinations back to the first bishops of the earliest Churches; and when they have succeeded, or think they have succeeded, in doing so, they find that these bishops were only presbyters.

To look at the matter otherwise. If the mediæval and modern bishops be not the direct descendants of the apostolic bishops, we must conclude the ancient order of bishops has died out, unless in so far as it is merged in the presbyterate. And yet we have a line of men bearing the name of bishop, from apostolic days down to the present time. There is no break in the chain when looked at as a whole, though it may be impossible to trace the links connecting any individual with the origin of the order. It is difficult to get over this continuity of the name as indicating the continuity of the office. Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews argues that names change their denotation, and that the modern bishop is no more the New Testament "episcopus" than the modern emperor is the Roman "imperator" of the commonwealth.<sup>2</sup> The illustration is an unfortunate one, and proves the reverse

of the Twelve Apostles) as well as of Paul and of Luke, were presbyters.

<sup>1</sup> See his "Fasti Romani."

<sup>2</sup> "No competent scholar now supposes that our English word 'bishop,' which in ordinary use has always meant one in the first order of a threefold ministry, is—though derived from ἐπίσκοπος—a proper translation for it in the New Testament, any more than our English word emperor, though derived from imperator, will be a

of what was intended. The modern emperor is the legitimate descendant of the ancient imperator or commander-in-chief, and we can trace the steps by which the one became the other, just as we think we can trace the steps by which the New Testament "episcopos" became the mediæval and modern bishop. There is continuity and development in both cases—identity with change.<sup>1</sup> Bishop Wordsworth says the English word bishop has always denoted one in the first order of a threefold ministry; but has the Greek word "episcopos" always denoted that? and it is with the word "episcopos" we have to do. Is the "epis-

proper translation for it when applied to a general of the Roman Commonwealth, such as Pompey or Sulla." ("Union or Separation," p. 2. See also "Duty of Maintaining the Balance of Revealed Truth," p. 7.)

If bishop be not the proper translation for episcopos in the New Testament, why should all translators persist in using the word, in the revised version as well as in the authorised, and indeed in every version with which I am acquainted? Of course every one knows that the modern diocesan bishop is a different kind of person from the bishop in the days of St. Paul—development has done much for him—just as the nineteenth century English gentleman is a different kind of person from the skin-clad painted British aborigines in the first century, from whom he is lineally descended.

As for the word "bishop" having always meant one in the first order of a threefold ministry, we must remember the threefold ministry had come into existence before the word "bishop" came into ecclesiastical use. The real controversy is not between bishop and episcopos, but between the episcopos of the first and of the succeeding centuries. The episcopos of the first century and part of the second was a presbyter, beyond that he was slowly developing into a prelate.

<sup>1</sup> There is no such thing as absolute identity. Even in what we call personal identity there is nothing but continuity with change. The man is identical with the child, yet changed. The amusing disputes of metaphysicians on this point are well known.



copos" of Chrysostom and Cyprian the same as the "episcopos" of Clement and of Paul? If not so, it must be explained how the one was merely a presbyter and the other was an apostle.

The claim to have succeeded the Apostles means to have succeeded them in their office—in their apostolate; so that bishops are apostles in reality, though not in name, possessing the power and discharging the functions of apostles. If it be so, historians should be able to say when this transfer of office without any transfer of name took place. This has never been done.<sup>1</sup> It is not enough to say that a bishop succeeded each Apostle as he died, for that is the very thing to be proved. In the earliest Christian literature apostles and bishops are spoken of as existing side by side as contemporaries. The bishops were not apostles, but something quite different. To pass beyond the Pauline epistles, in the "Shepherd" of

<sup>1</sup> Ambrosiaster, cited by Amalarius ("De Offic. Eccles.," ii. 13) and by Bingham, ii. 2, gives this rather curious account of how it came about:—"They who are now called bishops were originally called apostles. But the Holy Apostles being dead, they who were ordained after them to govern the churches, could not attain to the excellency of the first, nor had they the testimony of miracles, and were in many other respects inferior to them. They therefore did not think it decent to assume to themselves the name of apostles; but dividing the names, they left to presbyters the name of the presbytery, and they themselves were called bishops." The theory of Theophilus Anglicanus is not unlike this. Giesler's theory is simple and convincing.—"When the attempt was made at a later period to carry up the series of bishops as the successors of the Apostles to the Apostles themselves, the most distinguished presbyters of the earlier times were selected to be the first bishops." ("Hist.," vol. i. p. 109.)

Hermas<sup>1</sup> they are named separately, and in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," so recently brought to light, they are described as totally different men.<sup>2</sup>

What was the apostolic office? The Apostles may be looked at in two different lights. In the first place they were the personal friends of the great Master, and, as such, witnesses of His life and teaching. They were specially required to testify to the Resurrection as a fact which they knew. It was on this ground the apostleship of Paul was ques-

<sup>1</sup> Vision III., chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," recently discovered and published by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia, compare chap. xi. and chap. xv.

This early Christian document, *Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων*, was discovered by Bryennios in the library of the Most Holy Sepulchre in Fanar of Constantinople, in the same MS. in which was found the complete copy of Clement's Epistle. The date of the MS. is 1056 A.D., and the genuineness of the document has scarcely been doubted by any scholar. It probably belongs to the first quarter of the second century. It is quoted by Clement of Alexandria, by Eusebius, and by Athanasius. In a "Homily on Gamesters," sometimes attributed to Cyprian, but evidently not his, there is mention made of a book on the "Doctrine of the Apostles," by which is probably meant this treatise (see Dupin on St. Cyprian). The whole contents indicate a very primitive Christianity. It was first published by Bryennios at Constantinople in 1883, and now there are several editions and translations of it. I have mainly used an American edition, edited, with a translation, introduction, and notes, by Roswell D. Hitchcock and Francis Brown, Professors in Union Theological Seminary, New York; but I have carefully compared their translation with that of Archdeacon Farrar in the "Contemporary Review" for May 1884, and with the original text. It is certainly one of the most interesting and instructive monuments of Christian antiquity brought to light for a long time.

tioned.<sup>1</sup> It is self-evident that in this respect the Apostles could have no successors, at least beyond the first century. But, in the second place, and in a wider sense, the Apostles were simply men sent to preach the Gospel—missionaries, in short. In this sense every missionary, every minister, is a successor of the Apostles. Paul uses the term in this wider sense, when in his first Epistle to the Corinthian Church he says: “God hath set some in the Church, first apostles,” and then exclaims: “Are all apostles?”<sup>2</sup> And also in the Epistle to the Ephesians, when he says: “He gave some apostles and some prophets,”<sup>3</sup> etc. In no case had the Apostles any local charge—church, parish, or diocese—which they could hand over to a successor. No ecclesiastical historian, who is free from ecclesiastical trammels, now believes that Peter was Bishop of Rome, or John Bishop of Ephesus. From first to last the Apostles were itinerants, and when bishop-presbyters were settled over every church, their power and importance declined, and that just because they were no longer so much needed. This was the case almost as soon

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2. “Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” Notwithstanding Paul’s claim to having seen Christ, he was inclined to rest his title to the Apostleship mainly on the lower but more sensible ground of his having founded churches and made converts to Christianity. “The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.” That settled the matter, and I am content it should settle the matter in the case of all true bishops and presbyters.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29.

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. iv. 11.

as the original Apostles died out, though itinerant preachers, who were recognised in the early churches as apostles, still continued to exist.

The way in which these apostles were spoken of so early as the beginning or middle of the second century is almost pitiable, and gives a rude shock to all our ideas of apostolicity. In the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," already quoted, and which is supposed to belong to about 120-150 A.D.,<sup>1</sup> we have the following curiously instructive passage:— "Every apostle who comes to you let him be received as the Lord; but he shall not remain more than one day; if, however, there be need, then the next day; but, if he remains three days he is a false prophet. But when the apostle departs let him take nothing except bread enough till he lodge again; but if he ask money he is a false prophet."<sup>2</sup> Thus, then, the apostles of that day were strolling preachers, seeking a night's lodgings wherever they could get them, and it was thought necessary to warn the faithful against them. It is true there may be a reference here to the first Apostles being sent out without purse or scrip, but these second-century apostles are spoken of, not as proudly shaking the dust from their feet when they were refused admittance to a house, but as sometimes stooping so low as idly to sorn upon a confiding family

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lightfoot throws it still further back to 80-120 A.D. His theory of the origin of episcopacy required him to throw it thus far back.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xi.

for days together, and sometimes even beg for an alms. And, moreover, they were so numerous that they were not generally known in the Christian communities, and hence the lodging-test was to be applied to them. Our wonder is that the test was so severe for the immediate successors of the great Apostles,—only one night's lodgings and as much bread as would carry them on to their next night's quarters!

Such were the successors of the Apostles,—apparently not too much honoured or trusted. What a fall! By the light of this new document we see, amid the haze of the second century, not the majestic forms of the Twelve or of men like unto them, but these beggarly vagrants; some of them, no doubt, good men and true, but others idlers and cheats, making a gain of godliness, and all of them looked upon with suspicion. This is no illustrious ancestry! One should fancy that descent from the presbyter-bishops who were now managing the little Christian communities would be more respectable. Humble men they mostly were, too, but they were not vagrants; they had a special oversight and charge, and they were honoured among those to whom they ministered. "They are the honoured among you," says the author of the Teaching, "with the prophets and teachers."<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the difficulties involved in such

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xv. It would appear there were also at that time strolling prophets, who, pretending to speak under inspiration, asked for money. "Whoever, in the spirit, says, Give me money, or something

facts as these, a new effort has recently been made by Canon Liddon to lift the episcopate to the level of the apostolate. In a sermon preached in St. Paul's Cathedral on the consecration of the present Bishops of Lincoln and Exeter, he says, "the Apostles, being invested with the plenitude of ministerial power," first ordained deacons, then presbyters with "ministerial capacity," but with no faculty of transmitting it to others; and lastly, "certain men" who, "in addition to the fullness of ministerial capacity, had also the power of transmitting it."<sup>1</sup> He rests this theory on a well-known and much-controverted passage in Clement's Epistle, which he glosses thus:—"Lastly, St. Clement of Rome tells us, that desiring to avoid controversy which they foresaw, the Apostles ordained certain men to the end that when they should have fallen asleep in death others of approved character might succeed to their special office." The passage literally translated is this:—"Our Apostles also knew, through our Lord, that there would be strife concerning the name (or office) of the episcopate. For this reason, therefore, having received a perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the forementioned [persons], and afterwards gave instructions that when they should fall asleep other approved men should succeed to their ministry." The main dispute is as to whether the words "they

else, ye shall not hear him; but if for others in need he bids you give, let no one judge him." (See chap. xi.)

<sup>1</sup> See Sermon, "A Father in Christ," Third Ed., 1885.



should fall asleep" refer to the Apostles themselves or to the beforementioned persons appointed by them. Canon Liddon holds the former, Bishop Lightfoot holds the latter; and the context seems clearly to indicate that that is the true rendering.<sup>1</sup> The Apostles, it is affirmed, appointed to the ministry certain persons previously mentioned in the Epistle,<sup>2</sup> and further gave instructions that when they were gone other approved men should be put in their place, and that in this way a ministerial succession should be kept up; and from this Clement argues that those presbyters who were thus appointed by the Apostles or by other eminent men, with the consent of the Church, should not be dismissed from their office without good cause. But whatever the grammatical structure of the sentence, is it come to this, that episcopacy, driven from every other shelter, has taken refuge in this ambiguous sentence of this venerable but shadowy and not very intelligent man? And does the salvation of the world hang on a pronoun and its antecedent?

But Canon Liddon thinks that he sees in Timothy and Titus specimens of the "certain men" referred to

<sup>1</sup> The following is the passage in the original:—καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἡμῶν ἔγνωσαν διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν ὅτι ἔρις ἔσται ἐπὶ τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς. Διὰ ταύτην οὖν τὴν αἰτίαν πρόγνωσιν εἰληφότες τελείαν κατέστησαν τοὺς προειρημένους, καὶ μεταξὺ ἐπινομήν δεδώκασιν, ὅπως ἐὰν κοιμηθῶσιν, διαδέξωνται ἕτεροι δεδοκιμασμένοι ἄνδρες τὴν λειτουργίαν αὐτῶν. ("Epist." c. 44.) See "The Apostolic Fathers," vol. i., St. Clement of Rome, by Bishop Lightfoot.

<sup>2</sup> "Epist." c. 42.

by Clement. He admits they were "not yet exclusively called bishops." The fact is, that so far as we know, they were never called bishops at all. But he affirms they certainly were bishops, in the sense of the sub-apostolic, and of our own age. Though it does not appear they ever had the oversight of a Church, we may grant they were bishops in the sense of the sub-apostolic age, the age of Clement, of Hermas, of Polycarp, and the author of the "Didaché," when bishop and presbyter meant the same thing. We may also grant they were bishops according to the sense of our own age outside of the episcopal sphere. But though bishops they were not apostles; they were never ranked with the Twelve; nevertheless they did good work as the deputies of Paul, and having received the fulness of the ministerial gift themselves "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,"<sup>1</sup> they very probably took part in transmitting it to others, in so far as it could be transmitted at all.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is sometimes urged that the preposition used here is *μετά*, which does not indicate agency, but merely concurrence. But the words are, *διὰ προφητείας, ἑκτὴ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου*: so that the preaching must have been the agency (*διὰ*) which effected the ordination, combined with the imposition of hands. In his second epistle (i. 6) Paul says the graces of God came to Timothy, *διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου*, so that Timothy must have been twice subjected to the imposition of hands (a thing very probable), or Paul must have been one of the presbytery who prophesied and then laid their hands on the young disciple.

<sup>2</sup> Canon Liddon's sermon is very incisively reviewed by Dr. Hatch in the "Contemporary Review" (June 1885), and Canon Liddon reviews the review in a long introduction to the third edition of his sermon.



Thus the more we examine the theory of apostolic episcopacy the more does difficulty rise above difficulty. It is a thing of assumption without proof, and even without probability. The bishop of the present day, it is said, is the successor of the Apostles in their apostolic office; the bishop of the New Testament was not; he was merely a presbyter and remains a presbyter, having dropped his name of bishop. If so, where, I ask, did the new race of bishops, the true Apostle-bishops, come from? And when did they come into being? Clement gives us no information. Timothy and Titus make no reply. There is no trace of them in the New Testament; none in Patristic literature; no hint of a double line of bishops, a presbyterian and an apostolic, one without the capacity of transmitting their office and the other with it, in any history of the time, sacred or profane. But this is the desperate supposition to which Canon Liddon is driven, and he makes the very existence of the Church depend upon it.

It was not till the third century that the theory that bishops occupied the place of the Apostles began to be mooted; and it was first used for dogmatic purposes—to claim for the bishops the power of forgiving sins.<sup>1</sup> It was such a dogmatic development as

<sup>1</sup> "The power of remitting sins was given to the Apostles, and to the Churches which they, sent by Christ, established, and to the bishops who succeeded to them by vicarious ordination." See "Epistles of Cyprian," Epist. lxxiv. 16. Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea, to Cyprian.

On the other hand, Tertullian controverts this belief in the power

might have been expected in the circumstances of the times, when the pretensions of the clergy were rising so high. But at that time the theory that the bishops were the descendants of the Apostles was not thought inconsistent with the historical fact that they were also the lineal descendants of the primitive presbyters. Jerome was quite clear that the bishops of his day were come of presbyters, and yet we find him saying—"Among us the bishops hold the place of the Apostles."<sup>1</sup> Ambrosiaster, who held the same opinion as to the origin of the episcopate, uses similar language.<sup>2</sup> In fact, presbyters may be shown to have a much stronger claim than bishops to be regarded as the successors of the Apostles. We find two of the Apostles at least calling themselves presbyters.<sup>3</sup> In the fragment of Papias, which Eusebius has preserved to us, and which carries us back almost to Apostolic

of the Church to forgive sins, showing, however, by so doing that it existed in his day :—

"If because the Lord has said to Peter—'Upon this rock will I build my church'—'To thee have I given the keys of the heavenly kingdom'—or, 'Whatsoever thou shalt have bound or loosed in earth shall be bound or loosed in the heavens,' you therefore presume that the power of binding and loosing has derived to you, that is to every church akin to Peter, what sort of man are you, subverting and wholly changing the manifest intention of the Lord, conferring this gift personally upon Peter? 'On *thee*,' he says, 'will I build my church,' and 'I will give to *thee* the keys,' not to the Church. . . . The Church, it is true, will forgive sins, but the Church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man; not the Church which consists of a number of bishops." Tertullian, "De Pudicitia," chap. xxi.

<sup>1</sup> Apud nos apostolorum locum episcopi tenent. Epist. 41.

<sup>2</sup> "On Eph.," iv. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Peter and John.

times, the friend of Polycarp speaks of a whole group of Apostles as presbyters.<sup>1</sup> Pseudo-Ignatius, in four of his epistles, speaks of the presbyters of his day as occupying the place of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> Irenæus is still more decisive. "It is incumbent," he says, "to obey the presbyters, who are in the Church,—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the Apostles; those who, together with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father."<sup>3</sup>

If we cannot account for the origin of episcopacy by supposing that the bishops were the successors of the Apostles, or rather that they were apostles under a humbler name, we must trace the episcopate of all

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, "Hist. Eccles.," chap. xxxix., Papias says—"If I met with any one who had been a follower of the elders (or presbyters) anywhere, I made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the elders—what was said by Andrew, Peter, or Philip: what by Thomas, James, John, or any other of the disciples of our Lord; What was said by Aristion and the presbyter John, disciples of the Lord; for I do not think I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voice of those surviving." Bishop Lightfoot ("Contemporary Review," August 1875) argues that in this passage presbyter is not used as a name of office, but generally as signifying a Worthy or Father of the Church. I do not think there is good ground for his supposition, but supposing it true, it shows that the most honoured name in the Church was that of presbyter. The presbyter was the Worthy.

<sup>2</sup> Epistle to the Trallians, chap. ii. "Be ye subject also to the presbytery as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ." Epistle to the Smyrnæans, chap. viii.—"See that ye all follow the bishop even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as ye would the Apostles." See also Ep. to Philad., chap. v., and to Magnesians, chap. vi.

<sup>3</sup> "Heresies," book iv. chap. xxvi. sect. 2, with which compare book ii. chap. xxii. sect. 5.

the succeeding centuries up to the episcopate of the first. The wonder is one should ever have looked for its origin elsewhere. No doubt the prelatie bishop of the mediæval church was a very different person from the presbyter-bishop of the Apostolic Church; but development has achieved more wonderful feats than this. Give but time, and nothing is impossible in this way. As the development was a historical one, we must look to history, and we shall see that in its tangled web the process of evolution can easily be traced by which the presbyter-bishops of the first century became the prelate-bishops of the succeeding centuries.

There is an unfortunate gap of fifty years in the Church's history, stretching from the year 70 down to the year 120 or thereby, and if we could fill up that blank the chain of events would be complete. It is pretty certain the Johannine gospel belongs to that period, probably also the Acts of the Apostles; and the Tübingen school relegate more than half the epistles which are usually regarded as Pauline to the same dark days. Can we fill up the gap by accepting the theory of the Tübingen doctors? Do we get any new historical footing so far as church development is concerned? any new historical light regarding the problems we are discussing? Perhaps a little, but not much. We have more time for the growth of the church organisation depicted in Timothy and Titus, but that organisation may have sprung up rapidly, in a single lifetime. History

furnishes many examples of such a rapid growth. But there is still no trace of an episcopate. During the whole period covered by the canonical books the churches on both sides of the Hellespont were governed by presbyter-bishops.

In this same dim period, almost entirely unilluminated by authentic Christian history, the shadowy forms of the Apostolic Fathers loom upon us through the mist; but they do not help much to dissipate the darkness. The Epistle of Clement appears from its title to be written by the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth. The Corinthians were given to quarrel about their ministers in the days of Paul, Cephas, and Apollos, and the disposition had descended. They had now with much bitterness and bad blood dismissed some of their presbyters;<sup>1</sup> and the Roman Church, to whom perhaps the paid-off presbyters had appealed, wrote to remonstrate. In this epistle, written upon such an occasion, when episcopal jurisdiction would undoubtedly have been exercised if it existed, Clement merges himself in the

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Rom. Ep. pp. 44-47, 57. Though the Epistle bears to be from the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth—a significant fact—it has never been doubted that Clement is the author of it.

I may here say that my quotations from the early Fathers are generally taken from the translations in Clark's "Ante-Nicene Library." In the complete copy of the Epistle of Clement discovered by Bryennios and given by Bishop Lightfoot in his new and revised edition of the "Apostolic Fathers," vol. i., 1877, there is no new light thrown upon the matter under discussion, and no alteration in the passages to which I refer.

general community, assumes no episcopal authority, and makes no mention of a prelatical bishop existing at Corinth. If there was a bishop why was he not named, and why did he not authoritatively settle the dispute and protect without foreign intervention his inferior clergy? There was no such prelate; on the contrary, Clement speaks of presbyters as governing the Church; and though he does use the word bishop, it is used as interchangeable with presbyter. This venerable document, then, clearly proves that at the period when it was written, probably toward the end of the first century, the Churches of Rome and Corinth were under the rule of presbyter-bishops with a very limited jurisdiction, and subject to dismissal from their office at the caprice of the people.

Barnabas in his Epistle says nothing about the Church or its office-bearers, but declaring that those to whom he wrote had already "the first fruits of knowledge," he protests that he wrote to them "not as a teacher but as one of themselves."<sup>1</sup> This seems a repudiation of official position. Hermas in his celebrated "Shepherd" is almost equally void of anything ecclesiastical; but in one of his Visions he accidentally speaks of "the presbyters who preside in the Church."<sup>2</sup> And in another he enumerates "Apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons" as forming the white stones in his visionary building.<sup>3</sup> Dr.

<sup>1</sup> "Epistle of Barnabas," chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> Vision II. chap. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Vision III. chap. v.



Lightfoot claims Polycarp as his own, and one is unwilling not to concede to so fair and learned a writer anything he asks. But his claim upon Polycarp is of the slenderest kind. This celebrated Father begins his Epistle to the Philippians thus—"Polycarp and the presbyters with him to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi." The Bishop of Durham argues that Polycarp here writes as a bishop, for "he distinguishes himself from his presbyters." I fail to see the conclusiveness of this argument. A man may discriminate himself from his colleagues without claiming any superiority to them. Polycarp names himself specially in the case before us because he was the actual writer of the letter, though he associates his fellow-presbyters with himself to give it the more authority. Moreover, the initial sentence might equally well be translated "Polycarp and those who with him are presbyters,"<sup>1</sup> which would give the epistle a preponderating weight the other way. That this is the true rendering is made almost certain by the fact that while in the body of the Epistle he insists upon the duties of deacons and presbyters, he makes no mention whatever of a bishop. The bishop of Smyrna might at least have sent his greetings to the bishop of Philippi if a bishop there were.

Contemporary with Polycarp of Smyrna was Ignatius of Antioch. I am not going to enter the

<sup>1</sup> Πολύκαρπος καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ πρεσβύτεροι, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ παρόικούσῃ Φιλίπποις.



lists in the great Ignatian Controversy. I am not going to discuss whether the martyr wrote fifteen, or seven, or three epistles as he was being led to the lions. I am not going to determine whether the longer or the shorter Greek Recension is the original, or whether they are both spurious and the very brief Syriac Version is alone to be trusted; or whether neither long nor short, neither Greek nor Syriac, can stand the searching light of criticism.<sup>1</sup> These questions have been the battle-fields of churches. I may only remark that of late the tide of battle has been going rather against the genuineness, if not the authenticity, of the epistles in any form whatever. It is certain the ecclesiastical conceptions of the epistles (unless in their very shrunken Syriac form) are altogether different from those of the contemporaries of Ignatius. When we read them we feel we have passed into a new climate—that we have around us a more luxuriant vegetation. We have the three orders full-blown—the bishop, the presbyter, and the

<sup>1</sup> The most recent and the most valuable contribution to this subject is from the learned pen of Bishop Lightfoot in his "Apostolic Fathers," part ii., St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, published last year. He may be said to have exhausted all that can at present be said on the subject, discussing, as he does, its many curious problems with immense erudition and, upon the whole, with great fairness. He abandons his early belief in the Cureton letters, and contends earnestly for the seven Vossian letters. I must confess myself still sceptical, and cannot bring myself to believe that these letters, as they stand, were written by the historical Ignatius. The Cureton letters, apart from other considerations, *pro* and *con*., are more like the age in which they pretend to have been written.

deacon; and we are commanded to reverence the bishop as we reverence Christ. This is not in harmony with what we otherwise know of the beginning of the second century. No such fully-equipped churches then existed; no such High Church notions were then known. The author of the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," who was probably a contemporary of Ignatius, or lived a few years after him, speaks only of bishops and deacons. "Appoint for yourselves," says he, "bishops and deacons, worthy of the Lord, men meek and not avaricious, and upright and proved; for they too render you the service of the prophets and teachers."<sup>1</sup> And Justin, who wrote twenty or thirty years afterwards, speaks simply of the president of the brethren (or that one of the brethren who was presiding, ὁ προεστώς τῶν ἀδελφῶν) as administering the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup>

But though the Ignatian epistles may not be the work of Ignatius, they are certainly, in their shorter form, the product of the second century—probably about its middle or towards its close—and reflect a state of things which was then beginning to exist. The Apostolical Constitutions are probably nearly as old, and they also make a threefold ministry essential to a well-constituted Church.<sup>3</sup> Here then we have a new development. It was certain to come. As the

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xv.

<sup>2</sup> "Apology," 67.

<sup>3</sup> Baur thinks they belong to the second half of the second century. If so early they are largely interpolated.

congregations, aiming at organisation and autonomy, could not remain without officials; neither could the group of presbyters, aiming at unity, remain without a head. In the lower animal organisms nervous energy and sensibility are scattered over the whole body in many ganglia or nerve-knots; in the higher they are all concentrated in the brain. So it is in the evolution of societies from the lower to the higher.

As we have no contemporaneous document describing when or where or how the change occurred, we are left to grope our way toward the truth in a darkness broken only by some feeble and uncertain lights. The Church entered this darkness presbyterian, and emerged episcopalian, as Caledonia entered the darkness of the ninth century Pictish, and emerged Scottish, no man knowing how. We are, therefore, in a considerable measure left to conjecture. The theory of Rothe<sup>1</sup> is that after the martyrdom of James and the destruction of Jerusalem the remaining Apostles met, and not only appointed a successor to James in the Episcopate of Jerusalem, but to avert the danger of disruption, arranged a general system of episcopacy; and in fact, laid the first foundations of the Catholic Church. John, Philip, and Andrew organised the churches of Asia Minor on this plan. Baur<sup>2</sup> and Ritschl,<sup>3</sup> in Germany, both attacked this

<sup>1</sup> "Die Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche und ihrer Verfassung."

<sup>2</sup> "Ueber den Ursprung des Episcopats."

<sup>3</sup> "Die Entstehung der alt-Katholischen Kirche."

theory, but from different standpoints; and, in this country, Bishop Lightfoot has declared that the slender historical notices upon which it rests will not bear the strain that is put upon them. The theory is not only without any foundation in fact, but contrary to the probability of things.

I have frequently referred to Bishop Lightfoot, for he has traced the evolution of the episcopate out of the presbyterate with great learning and love of fair play. He disclaims official apostolic descent, and in this he is true to his theory of development. He recognises that it was more likely that the presbyter-bishop should expand into the bishop than that the bishop should be a shrunken and deteriorated apostle. In the continuity of the name he sees the best proof of the identity of the men. He thinks, however, that in the position of James in the Church of Jerusalem we have episcopacy in a rudimentary form. He presided in the first council, pronounced its decision, and occupied a position superior to all others. Going beyond this, he connects the episcopal evolution with three great names, each marking a distinct stage in its progress—Ignatius, Irenæus, and Cyprian. Concurrent events helped and hastened on the change. The Church was plunged in a sea of troubles—heathenism without, heresy within—and it was necessary there should be unity and authority, and this the episcopate provided.

There can be no doubt but this theory comes

very near to the truth. The only questionable point is the episcopal position which the Bishop of Durham assigns to James. The Lord's brother certainly does seem to have taken a leading part in the council which was held at Jerusalem to settle the vexed questions which were raised about circumcision and forbidden meats;<sup>1</sup> and he is mentioned by Paul as being, with Cephas and John, one of the pillars of the Jerusalem Church.<sup>2</sup> But it is more probable that he owed this to his personal character, and the reverence which would naturally be given him as the Lord's brother, than to any special appointment. He never acts alone, but always with the elders and brethren. He was not one of the Twelve—it is probable he was long a disbeliever—and it is hardly credible that he should have been officially placed above the Apostles still at Jerusalem, among whom were the very chief of the band, Peter and John. It is possible his position may have "adumbrated" the episcopate, or even have done something towards paving the way for it; but, as already said, the position of Paul in reference to the Churches of Corinth, Rome, Ephesus, and Galatia was much more like that of the future diocesan bishop.

Dr. Hatch, in his admirable Bampton Lectures,<sup>3</sup> has followed the same path of inquiry as Bishop Lightfoot, with equal learning and more daring

<sup>1</sup> Acts xv.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> "The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches," by Edwin Hatch, M.A.

originality, throwing a new light upon some of the factors in the development, and illuminating the whole subject by occasional flashes of thoughtful eloquence. He shows that in civil life the *episcopos* was the well-known treasurer of the many friendly societies, which were as common in the Græco-Roman world as in modern Europe. The Church being from the first a friendly association, with money to collect and disburse, especially among the poor, the *episcopos* of the fraternities and clubs naturally became its official. But it was usual in these ancient fraternities, as well as in the municipalities of the time, to have a council of officials. In this respect there was a correspondence between the institutions of the Greeks and the Jews, for their synagogues were managed by a plurality of presbyters. So it came about that the primitive churches were ruled by a committee or council of their leading members, who were sometimes called *presbuteroi* and sometimes *episcopoi*. But it was also usual in these associations and municipalities to have a president of the council. The churches, composed of men who were members of these associations and municipalities, could not but be influenced by the custom of the time; they would naturally copy the models which they found everywhere existing; they would recognise the necessity of doing so; and so, when the churches increased in members and wealth, it became usual for the congregational councils to choose a pre-



sident to preside at their meetings, more especially when the Eucharist was to be celebrated. On these occasions not only were the Scriptures to be read and the prayers recited, but the alms of the faithful were to be received. The presiding officer, on that account, came to be specially called the *EPISCOPOS*—the treasurer of the Church—the head-centre of its charities. He received the contributions; and according to his directions the deacons distributed them. Such an office necessarily grew in importance with the growing wealth of the Church, and so the *episcopos* or bishop became the president of the presbyterate, and finally the diocesan prelate.

This theory, though promulgated by an episcopal clergyman, is repellent to most episcopalians, as it makes the bishop, the supposed channel of Apostolic grace, the descendant of a mere financier. But if charity be the first of the Christian virtues and almsgiving its natural outcome, there should be no shame in the fact of the first bishops having been keepers of the poor's-box. Beyond all question, Dr. Hatch has disinterred many interesting facts and relationships in the history of the episcopate, and has approached as near to the actual verity as any one.

Though we have no contemporary describing the process of development and change as going on under his eyes, we have Patristic writers who tell us how it came about, and that at a time when the traditions of the Church were still fresh, and when probably



there were documents existing which have perished since. Foremost among them was Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, and was one of the most learned men of a period distinguished by its learned and illustrious ecclesiastics. He tells us that "before factions in religion were introduced by the prompting of the devil, and people began to say, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the churches were governed by a common council of presbyters. But after every one came to think those whom he had baptized were his own and not Christ's, it was decreed throughout the whole world that one of the presbyters should be chosen and placed over the others, to whom the whole charge of the Church should appertain and the seeds of schism be removed." "My object in all this," he continues, "is to show that among the ancients, presbyters were the same as bishops; but that, by degrees, the whole charge was laid upon one, in order that the growth of schisms might be rooted out. Therefore, as the presbyters know that they, by ecclesiastical usage, are subject to him who has been set over them; so let the bishops know that it is by ecclesiastical usage rather than by any divine appointment that they are greater than the presbyters, and that they ought to rule the Church in common."<sup>1</sup>

This passage bears upon its face the impress of truth.<sup>2</sup> It is, indeed, impossible there could be such

<sup>1</sup> Hieronymus ad Titum, i. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews, in his "Outlines of the Christian Ministry" (pp. 166-169), attempts to discredit this de-

a decree as the learned Father speaks of, for there was no central authority to issue it; and it is therefore probable he refers only to the universal consent of the Church, which indeed constitutes its sentence. He tells us immediately afterwards that the change was brought about gradually; and we know from other sources that it took more than a century to effect it; and that even long after that there were vestiges of the more ancient usage still existing. We may safely accept his testimony that jealousies, rivalries, and quarrels were among the causes which led to one presbyter being placed over his brethren to maintain order and unity. But even without these disturbing causes the necessity of a president would be generally felt. Every meeting must have its chairman, every committee its convener, every society its head. There must be unity in order to action.<sup>1</sup> In the little Christian congregations the Eucharist must be administered on every first day; who was to do this, if not one of the presbyters referred to by Paul as having the greatest aptitude to teach, and therefore as deserving of the greatest honour? From the first there would always be some man in those

cise testimony, mainly by supposing that Jerome had been disappointed of a bishopric, and was inclined, in his bitterness of spirit, to speak slightly of the office.

<sup>1</sup> "Es liegt diess an sich schon in dem zum Begriffe der Kirche gehörenden Streben nach Einheit." Such is Baur's dictum. But he thinks this would not have been enough unless the need for unity had been intensified by the rising heresy, etc. ("Kirchengeschichte der Drei Ersten Jahrhunderte." Band I. Dritter Abschnitt.)

primitive presbyteries who would assert his personal superiority. The transition would be a very easy one ; for to be recognised as the leading man in a small gathering of despised Nazarenes could be but poor preferment to any one. At first he would simply be the president of the brethren—as in Justin ; but the office, which was at first temporary, would gradually become permanent, and the Greek name *episcopos* would naturally be given him, as the Greek element was now the predominating one in the Church. Christianity was fast drifting away from Judea, though it was carrying many Jewish notions with it. Thus, then, eternal law decreed the change, the development, though there was no council of the Church to do it.

Thus, at last, we have the three-graded ministry<sup>4</sup>—the bishop, the presbyter, and the deacon. We have episcopacy, but it is congregational episcopacy. The world was not yet ripe for diocesans and dioceses. Every congregation had its own bishop. This is abundantly plain from the pseudo-Ignatian epistles. Each of the Churches addressed—the Trallian, the Magnesian, the Philadelphian, the Smyrnæan—is represented as having its own bishop. One altar, one bishop, is an Ignatian maxim.<sup>1</sup> Without the bishop no baptism could be performed, no Eucharistic or love-feast held.<sup>2</sup> The presence of the bishop was necessary to every religious act and even every religious meeting. “ Wherever the bishop shall appear,

<sup>1</sup> “ Ad Philad.,” chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> “ Ad Smyrn.,” chap. viii.

there let the multitude also be, even as wherever Jesus Christ is there is the Catholic Church.”<sup>1</sup>

The polity of the Church of Scotland is a perfect facsimile of this Ignatian episcopacy. Let the minister be called bishop (as he properly may); let the elders remain as they are, but let them be assisted by a body of deacons, as in some cases they are, and you have the episcopacy of the Ignatian Church. The resemblance is the more striking from this circumstance, that the minister and his elders are theoretically all equal—all presbyter-bishops—but practically the minister is the president and superior of the elders, as without this arrangement the business of the Church could not be carried on. And with him only is the power to ordain.

But though by the middle of the second century there was, in many provinces at least, a three-graded ministry, there were not three orders, in the more strict ecclesiastical meaning of the term. The distinction was in rank rather than in office. The bishop was only a presbyter of a higher grade.<sup>2</sup> Irenæus did

<sup>1</sup> “Ad Smyrn.,” chap. viii.—These congregational bishops were necessarily very numerous. “From the small province of proconsular Asia,” says Dr. Hatch, “which was about the size of Lincolnshire, 42 bishops were present at an early council; in the half-converted province of North Africa 470 episcopal towns are known by name.” (Lect. iii., p. 79.) In agreement with this we are told by Nennius, in his “History of Britain,” that St. Patrick founded 365 churches in Ireland and ordained 365 bishops—a bishop for a church—beside 3000 presbyters. The story is mythical, but it is based on the historical fact of congregational episcopacy.

<sup>2</sup> It is worthy of note that in the “Apostolic Constitutions” the ordi-

not hesitate to speak of the bishops of Rome as presbyters. Hilary, the deacon, wrote: "The ordination of the bishop and the presbyter is one, for each is a priest, but the bishop is first; so that every bishop is a presbyter, but every presbyter is not a bishop. He is bishop who is first among the presbyters."<sup>1</sup> As we have already seen, Jerome insists on the original identity of the offices, and he points to the ancient custom in the Alexandrian Church, where, on the death of a bishop, the presbyters met and selected one of themselves to the office.<sup>2</sup> Eutychius, who held the patriarchate of Alexandria from 933 to 940 A.D., and who may be presumed to have known something of the history of his see, says this custom continued down to the beginning of the fourth century, and that the presbyters not only chose the new bishop, but ordained him.<sup>3</sup>

This belief in the equality of the bishop and the presbyter in point of orders was held by almost every writer of note down to the Council of Trent. Popes and councils maintained it. Canonists, com-

nation of a bishop is not made by the laying on of hands, as no new order is given. See book viii. chap. iv.

<sup>1</sup> In "Comment. ad 1 Tim., iii. 10."

<sup>2</sup> Epist. 101, "Ad Evangelum."

<sup>3</sup> "Annales," i. p. 331.—"Eligerent unum e duodecim presbyteris, cujus capiti reliqui undecim manus imponerent, eique benedicerent et patriarcham eum crearent." Hilary, the deacon, had previously affirmed this—Ad Ephes. iv. 12—"Denique apud Ægyptum presbyteri consignant, si præsens non sit episcopus." In like manner the pseudo-Augustine "Nam in Alexandria et per totam Ægyptum, si desit episcopus, consecrat presbyter."

mentators, and schoolmen argued for it.<sup>1</sup> Though seven orders altogether were enumerated, the presbyterate was the highest. The Pope stood alone as the successor of St. Peter. But when the doctors of Trent declared "that bishops succeeded to the position of apostles, and were placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church," Roman opinion became divided.<sup>2</sup> But the presbyterate has never been formally displaced from its position of pre-eminence. In the early Anglican Church the same belief was taught in the formularies of faith, published in the reign of Henry VIII. In the well-known "Institutions of a Christian Man," published in 1536, and sanctioned by the Lords Temporal and Spiritual, and in the Ordinal down to the disastrous times of the Act of Uniformity, this was the doctrine recognised and acted on.<sup>3</sup> Even Hooker declares that the clergy are either presbyters or deacons.<sup>4</sup> That the bishop belongs to a higher order than the presbyter is therefore a modern idea, unknown alike to the ante-Tridentine and the Reformation Churches.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See "Giesler," vol. i. pp. 88, 89, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Sprott's "Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland," pp. 188-190; also Bishop Wordsworth's "Union or Separation," pp. 12, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Book v. chap. lxxviii. sect. 2.

<sup>5</sup> The following sentences of Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews are very significant. "The Church of Rome, through the excessive usurpation of its Pontificate, has virtually lost the threefold ministry. It has bishops, but they are not a distinct order from presbyters. The Pope not only claims the power of conferring episcopal functions, such as ordination, upon simple presbyters, but he alone has in effect



When the bishop was fairly raised above the presbyter his future progress was secured. The Church was then rapidly growing, and the bishop grew with it. The infection of the new religion was spreading from the towns to the country districts. Little Christian societies were being formed everywhere. The town bishops placed men over these rural churches, and the rural churches were glad to get these approved instructors. The town gave its patronage and support, and the country gave in return its willing obedience. The country bishops were generally very humble men, inferior in every respect to the city presbyters. The former were forbidden to ordain, while the latter might; only, if they exercised this function in any parish but their own, they must have the bishop's consent.<sup>1</sup> Groups of churches thus sprang up round the great cities under the fostering care of the metropolitan bishops, and the country bishops gladly acknowledged the jurisdiction of their chief. We see something not unlike this in our own country and time. The population

engrossed to himself the episcopal order." ("The Case of Non-Episcopal Ordination.") This not only bears out all that is said in the text, but it suggests the question, If the Roman bishops are not bishops, through what channel have the Anglican bishops their apostolical succession? Has not Bishop Wordsworth here sawn off the branch on which he was sitting?

<sup>1</sup> Council of Ancyra, canon 13. As this canon has been a great source of perplexity to many, I shall here quote it. *Χωρεπισκόπους μὴ ἐξεῖναι πρεσβυτέρους ἢ διάκονους χειροτονεῖν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ πρεσβυτέρους πόλεως, χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπιτραπῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μετὰ γραμμάτων ἐν ἐτέρᾳ παροικίᾳ.* ("Hefele," vol. i. p. 211.)



of a parish, from the opening of coal-pits, or the erection of mills, or the influx of summer visitors, increases twofold, threefold, or it may even be tenfold. The consequence is, chapels are built here, there, everywhere, and the parish minister finds himself, in point of fact, a diocesan prelate.

5. PAPALISM.—When diocesan episcopacy appeared, congregational independency perished. And the development in this direction went on till all the churches of Christendom were linked together under one supreme head. As the bishop rose above the presbyter, the metropolitan rose above the bishop, and the patriarch above the metropolitan, and at last the Pope, or universal bishop, crowned the whole. The ecclesiastical map was framed after the civil one. For the Roman empire was at that time divided into fourteen political dioceses, and these were subdivided into a hundred and eighteen provinces, and these into an almost countless number of parishes. The bishop had charge of a *παροικία* or parish, the metropolitan had charge of an *ἐπαρχία* or province, and the patriarch had charge of a *διοίκησις* or diocese. If there was to be unity and government in the Church, such an arrangement was absolutely necessary. When a few Christians met in a private house they required no government or governors at all. When the Church was now spread over the whole empire, and numbered many millions of adherents, there must be a gradation of office-bearers rising from the deacon to the Pope. A

corporal may command a single file, but where you have a hundred thousand men in the field, you must have captains, colonels, brigadier-generals, and a commander-in-chief.

These marvellous developments caused the bishop to part with some of his monopoly of power, but they enormously increased what remained. He could no longer be present in every congregational gathering, like his Ignatian predecessor, and so the right to baptize and administer the Eucharist passed to the presbyter. But the right to ordain was tenaciously held—upon this point there could be no surrender—and now it was maintained that it was only by the episcopal line that any one could become a minister of the Church. But traces of the more primitive practice remained long afterwards, like the vestiges of the eocene period in the midst of the miocene. In the patriarchal city of Alexandria, as we have already related, the twelve presbyters who ruled the Church with the bishop, whenever a vacancy occurred in the see, chose one of their own number and ordained him to the vacant place. So it was down to the fourth century.<sup>1</sup> In Scotland, where a primitive form of Christianity was received through St. Columba and his

<sup>1</sup> Hier. Ep., 146, ad Evang.; Ambrosiaster in Ephes. iv. 12; Eutychiei Patr. Alexand. Annales; Lightfoot, p. 229; Hatch, p. 110. Ambrosiaster says distinctly that in Egypt the presbyters consecrated if the bishop was not present. In accordance with this we read of Paphnutius in the Egyptian desert ordaining a monk successively as deacon and priest. (Cassian. "Collat.," iv. 1, apud Migne.)

Irish Scots, and where the changes which had taken place in ecclesiastical ideas at Rome, Carthage, and Constantinople were still unknown—the presbyter-abbot of Iona ordained bishops to the churches he had founded among the Picts. These missionary monks went still farther—they penetrated into England, they settled at Lindisfarne, they founded several of the great English Sees, having themselves nothing but presbyterian ordination;<sup>1</sup> and thus it may be demonstrated that as the episcopacy of all succeeding centuries rests upon the presbytery of the first, so the episcopacy of England rests ultimately upon the presbyterianism of Scotland.

I have finished my historical deduction as to the Church's organisation. I have shown that all through the ages evolution has been at work, and

As with the Irish Scots, so among the presbyter-missionaries sent to the Teutonic tribes, so late as the eighth century, presbyterian ordination was practised. The schoolmen and canonists allow that presbyters may ordain with the Pope's license as the Council of Ancyra had allowed they might with the bishop's. All these vestiges point back to an earlier usage, and show that exclusively episcopal ordination was introduced as a matter of order and not of function. If presbyters did not ordain during the first century and a half, who did? Possibly the laity in some cases; there is no other alternative.

<sup>1</sup> Bede's "Eccles. Hist.," book iii. chap. 5. We are told that the presbyter-abbot Columba and his fellow-monks "concluded that he (Aidan) deserved to be made a bishop, and ought to be sent to instruct the unbelieving and unlearned, since he was found to be possessed of singular discretion, which is the mother of other virtues, and accordingly having ordained, they sent him to their friend, King Oswald, to preach."

that the Church of the present is the result of the many millions of factors which have been unceasingly in operation in the past.

Let me summarise in a few sentences the conclusions to which I have come. No church now existing is an exact counterpart of the Apostolic Church. The societies which come nearest to the apostolic are the Society of Friends and the Plymouth Brethren. But I regard these as exhibiting the lowest and not the highest form of church organisation. Congregationalism is a step in advance, and corresponds to the state of the Church during the second half of the first century when bishops and deacons were ordained; but a church-system which leaves all power in the hands of the people (without delegation), and has no bonds by which one congregation can be bound to another in a single unity, is still very far from a perfect polity. Development, therefore, could not stop here. The Ignatian Epistles exhibit a church in which there were three grades of officials, and it is clear that these had usurped the ruling power, for the theme mainly insisted upon is that the people should reverence and obey the bishop, and after him the presbyters and deacons. The Church of Scotland, as I have already said, is a reproduction of the Church of the pseudo-Ignatius. It has the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons, and it is certainly the duty of the people to reverence and obey them. The bishop and the presbyters—or,

in the Scotch ecclesiastical vocabulary, the minister and elders—met in council form the primitive presbytery or eldership. Thus what is usually regarded as Ignatian episcopacy is in reality Scotch Presbyterianism.

It may indeed be said that we have not in the Ignatian church the gradation of ecclesiastical courts which exists in Scotland. That is true. Such a gradation of courts was unknown in the ancient Church, and is a development of the post-reformation period. It has sometimes been argued that in the convocation of James and the elders and brethren at Jerusalem to heal the disputes which had arisen from the broad teaching of Paul, we have the first example of a Presbyterian Synod. But there is not the slightest analogy in the cases. The meeting at Jerusalem was a meeting of the members of one church only, to whose decision the matter had been referred, and not of the representatives of several churches; which is one of the cardinal ideas involved in the Scottish graduated system of Church Courts.

When the bishop had risen above his brother presbyters, and secured the chief rule in the Church, a new development was necessary to bind the churches of a district or a province or a whole country into one. This end might be attained either by all the congregational bishops meeting in a common court and arranging their affairs in unison, or by one bishop gaining a pre-eminence over his brother

bishops, and creating a central authority in his own person. The latter development took place from circumstances which I have already explained, together with the imperial tendencies of the time. Diocesan bishops, patriarchs, and popes ruled the Church. The federal possibility was never realised,<sup>1</sup> and remained in abeyance till the sixteenth century. There were indeed councils of the Church from the third century downwards; but never was there a group of congregations associated together as a National Church and ruled by a gradation of courts—from the Kirk-Session up to the General Assembly—till the Scottish Church sprang into being under the inspiration of Knox and Melville. Still it is an Apostolic Church—an Ignatian Church—with a higher and better development. The first development of the Ignatian Church was aristocratic

<sup>1</sup> As to the possibilities involved in the future of the Church as in the future of every individual, Dr. Hatch says with great force and truth: "At the time when the majority of the sacred books were written that polity was in a fluid state. It had not yet congealed into a fixed form. It seems, as far as can be gathered from the simple interpretation of the text, without the interpretation which history has given it, to have been capable of taking several other forms than that which, in the divine economy, ultimately established itself. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical monarchy in the position which is assigned to the Apostles. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical oligarchy in the fact that the rulers of the Church are almost always spoken of in the plural. It has the elements of an ecclesiastical democracy in the fact, among others, that the appeal which St. Paul makes to the Corinthians in a question of ecclesiastical discipline is made neither to bishops nor to presbyters, but to the community at large." (P. 21.)



and oligarchical—the second was republican and federal.

The inevitable issue of my argument is that the papacy is the highest development of ecclesiastical polity. It was the necessary result of the tendency of events from the first century downwards. It is a marvellous organisation, maintaining order and unity ; giving authority, and yet restraining its excesses, over half the world. It may be said to be the product of divine law rather than of human wisdom. As the Church grew the polity grew with it, just as the animal framework grows with the animal itself. But its very perfectness was its ruin. It became a great, overshadowing despotism, omnipresent, omnipotent, crushing out all life and liberty of thought, and binding Christendom “in chains of darkness.”

Another inevitable inference is that no church polity has a divine right to the exclusion of all others. That church has the divinest right which does its work the best. Everything connected with the tabernacle was prescribed, from the colour of a curtain to the metal of a candle-snuffer ; but so far as the Church is concerned everything is free. It can thus be accommodated to every country and every age. The free spirit of the Apostolic Church gave way to the imperial temper of the Papal Church ; and the imperialism of the papacy bended before the republicanism of presbytery in several countries of



Europe ; but each has done good, and is doing good, in its own place and time. And so may God prosper all ! Some people call this indifferentism, but if good is done, it surely does not much matter how it is done.

## LECTURE II.

### MINISTERS AND PEOPLE.

HAVING seen the origin and growth of the different orders of office-bearers in the Church, let us now look into the relation they had to the Christian people. I think I shall be able to show—I. That they were originally chosen by the people, and dismissed, when dissatisfaction arose, by the people. II. That they did not form a class or caste distinct from the other members of the Church. III. That they were, in no sense, priests.

As preliminary to the discussion of each of these propositions separately, I may call your attention to the fact that Jesus, the divine Master, uniformly discouraged any claim to superiority on the part of any of His disciples. He refused to allow any of them to be called Rabbi; He taught them humility by waiting on them at table and washing their feet; He rebuked the ambition of the mother of James and John, who had asked for her sons the highest

places when He came in His kingdom. He gave a distinct preference to the poor and despised. It was to the poor the Gospel was preached. It was to the poor the kingdom of God belonged. The beggar Lazarus was promoted in the future world to the seat next to Abraham, the great hero of Hebrew history. "Every one that exalteth himself," said He, "shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with these ideas when the Church first took shape in Jerusalem it was Communistic—not compulsorily so—but voluntarily so. "All that believed were together, and had all things in common."<sup>2</sup> The most elementary lesson of the new religion was—that all men are brethren. In the first Pauline churches, as we have already seen, no one had a pre-eminence over another. There was—in the best sense of the words—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. In like manner, in the Judaistic churches, "The brother of low degree gloried in his high estate, and the rich in that he was made low."<sup>3</sup> Any respect to the man with the gold ring and the goodly apparel over the man in vile raiment, any assumption of superiority by would-be instructors, was sternly repressed.

We may be sure that these democratic ideas would have their influence in the election of office-bearers and the assignment of their place in the Church. A

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiv. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 44.

<sup>3</sup> James i. 9, 10.

church so free would not all at once give itself over to slavery. Let us look at the facts.

I. (a) The first office-bearers of the Church were elected by the whole community. This is true even of the Apostle chosen in the room of Judas. All the converts in Jerusalem, numbering about a hundred and twenty, met and selected from themselves two whom they deemed worthy of the office; and then being at a loss as to which of these two was the better man, they resolved to determine the matter by lot, according to a custom of the time.<sup>1</sup> This was, to all intents, popular election; for not only did the assembled Christians fix upon the two, but they resolved that the lot should decide which of the two should be the new Apostle. The next office-bearers which the exigencies of the community demanded were the deacons, and they in like manner were popularly elected. "And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out, therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen,"<sup>2</sup> etc. etc. There could be no clearer or better case. The Apostles put the rights of the

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Acts vi. 2-5.

people to choose their office-bearers above their own apostolic authority.

It may be said there is no proof that the same method was followed in the election of presbyters in the primitive Gentile Churches, but rather a presumption, if not a proof, of the reverse. Let us look at the scanty notices which we have on the subject. "And when they," says the author of the Acts of the Apostles with reference to Paul and Barnabas, on one of their missionary tours, "had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed."<sup>1</sup> In the brevity of this notice there is nothing to forbid but rather encourage the supposition that the Apostles got men appointed by vote (*χειροτονήσαντες*) as elders, and then prayed over them. "For this cause," says Paul to Titus, "left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge."<sup>2</sup> There is nothing here to make us believe that Paul wished the young

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv. 23. The authorised version says "had ordained." I think the revised version more correctly renders *χειροτονήσαντες* "appointed," as the reference is to stretching out the hand in voting and not in ordaining.

<sup>2</sup> Titus i. 5. Here the authorised version also says "ordain." The word is *καταστήσης*, which means "set apart;" but we are left uncertain whether the reference is to the setting apart by appointment or by ordination. It is not improbable the appointment was the ordination, though probably followed by prayer and the imposition of hands.

Titus to set aside the wishes of the little Christian communities in Crete, and on his own responsibility to choose presbyters for them. Probably nothing more was meant than that he was to see this done. "As I gave thee charge," says Paul. Looking to the free, democratic spirit which prevailed in the Churches of Rome and Corinth, it is impossible to believe that the Apostle of expediency should wish Titus to become "a lord over God's heritage"<sup>1</sup> in the Churches of Crete; but it is most natural to think that he should be instructed to give his help in organising the infant communities and in appointing their presbyters. These may have been popularly elected, as in other cases we know they were; or where the whole Christian society consisted only of a handful of people, little or no form of election may have been necessary. There were probably in most cases outstanding men clearly entitled to the office. The deputy of Paul, with the approbation of the others, would set them apart to their office by prayer and the imposition of hands, according to the Jewish mode when a blessing was invoked.

This is all the canonical information we possess. Paul describes to Timothy the kind of men who should be chosen as presbyter-bishops and deacons,<sup>2</sup> but he says nothing regarding the mode of their election. He advises Timothy to "lay hands hastily on no man,"<sup>3</sup> where reference is probably made to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter v. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. iii.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. v. 22.

ordination. Taking it so, the advice does not imply that Timothy was to elect the candidates for the ministry, but rather that he was to exercise caution as to ordaining those who had been elected by others—pointing to a real danger from the existing state of society and the miscellaneous character of the converts.<sup>1</sup> He was to act as a check, and if need were, to exercise a veto.

Passing onwards from the canonical writers, the first Christian authority we meet with is Clement of Rome. He distinctly indicates that in his time the presbyters of the Church were chosen with the approbation, if not by the direct suffrages of the people. “We are of opinion,” says he, “that those appointed by them (the Apostles), or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole Church,”<sup>2</sup> etc. etc. This passage may be taken, not only as showing the practice in the time of Clement, but as indicating the course that was probably followed by Timothy and Titus, and thus letting in light upon the Pastoral Epistles, which were not long anterior in date to the epistle of the first known bishop of Rome. There is incontestable evidence that such popular election as this continued down to the sixth century. Bishops and presbyters were chosen by a show of hands,<sup>3</sup> or by

<sup>1</sup> Clemens Romanus (Epist. xlii.) says they “first proved them by the Spirit”—whatever that may mean.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* xliv.

<sup>3</sup> *χειροτονία*—See 2 Cor. viii. 19; Acts x. 41; Acts xiv. 23. Renan says: “Les ‘anciens’ étaient quelquefois élus aux voix, c’est-à-dire à la



the people shouting, “*ἄξιος, ἄξιος*”—He is worthy, he is worthy. Eusebius relates, regarding the election of Fabian to the See of Rome about the middle of the third century: “When all the brethren were assembled in the church for the purpose of appointing him that should succeed to the episcopate, though there were very many eminent and illustrious men in the estimation of many, Fabianus being present, no one thought of any other man. They relate further, that a dove, suddenly flying down from on high, sat upon his head, exhibiting a scene like that of the Holy Spirit once descending upon our Saviour in the form of a dove. Upon this, the whole body exclaimed, with all eagerness and with one voice, as if moved by the one Spirit of God, that he was worthy; and, without delay, they took and placed him on the episcopal throne.”<sup>1</sup> The story of the dove may be a myth, or may have been a trick,<sup>2</sup> but the

main levée, quelquefois établis par l'apôtre, mais toujours considérés comme choisis par le Saint Esprit.” (“Saint Paul,” chap. ix. p. 238.)

Dean Stanley says: “Before the conversion of the Empire, bishops and presbyters alike were chosen by the whole mass of the people in the parish or diocese.” (“Christian Institutions,” chap. x.) He might have extended the practice far beyond the conversion of the Empire, as the examples he gives demonstrate. See also “Apostolical Constitutions,” book viii. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Euseb., “Eccles. Hist.,” vi. 29. The incident belongs to the year 236 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Such tricks were common. The election of Severus, Bishop of Ravenna, and of Euortius, Bishop of Orleans, is said to have been determined in this way. At the baptism of Clovis a pigeon came, bringing with it a phial of anointing oil. Analogous to this was the letting an eagle loose at the apotheosis of a Roman emperor. It repre-

rest of the narrative clearly shows the custom of the time. The cry, "He is worthy," were the customary electing words.<sup>1</sup>

Cyprian, though a High Churchman, and a stickler for the power of the clergy, refers, in several of his epistles, to the consent of the people being necessary to the ordination of bishop, presbyter, or deacon.<sup>2</sup> In one case, while confessing that it was usual for him to consult his presbyters and people, he acknowledges, in an apologetic tone, that he had, on his own responsibility, ordained a reader, as he was a man specially designated by God for office in the church.<sup>3</sup> In the letters of Augustine and the writings of Ambrose, there are notices to the same effect, and to the cry of the people—"He well deserves the office!"<sup>4</sup> Pope Leo I., in several letters, lays down specific instructions for conducting such elections.<sup>5</sup> Nor was it to the sented the flight of his soul heavenward. Every one remembers Napoleon III. and his tame eagle.

<sup>1</sup> Philostorgius, book ix. chap. x. See also Augustine's "Epistles" (110): "Bene meritus, bene dignus est : dignus et justus est."

<sup>2</sup> Epist. lxxvii. He speaks of "Our colleague Sabinus having the episcopate conferred on him by the suffrage of the whole brotherhood, and by the sentence of the bishops, who had assembled in their presence."

Epist. xli. 8. "Cornelius was made bishop by the judgment of God and His Christ ; by the testimony of almost all the clergy, by the suffrage of the people who were there present, and by the assembly of ancient priests and good men."

See Bingham, book iv. chap. ii., where much information on this point will be found.

<sup>3</sup> Epist. xxxii.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, "Epist." 110 ; Ambrose, "De Dignit. Sacerd.," cap. v.

<sup>5</sup> Epist. 84-89.

meaner orders or the smaller parishes only that the popular voice gave preferment. Bishops and popes were thus elected. The Sees of Rome, Milan, Carthage, Constantinople, and Antioch were thus filled. Cornelius and Damasus, Ambrose<sup>1</sup> and Augustine, Gregory and Chrysostom,<sup>2</sup> Eustathius and Meletius were all chosen in this way. Sometimes the popular and partisan feeling was so keen, as in the case of Damasus, that the election ended in rioting and bloodshed. For centuries universal suffrage prevailed in the Church.

(b). As the Christians had a voice in the election of their ministers, so do they appear to have claimed the right to dismiss them. The Church of Corinth, as we have already seen, got dissatisfied with its presbyters and turned them adrift, just as any secular society might have done. It was on this account Clement of Rome wrote them his celebrated letter. Without assuming any jurisdiction over them, he remonstrates with them for doing as they had done; but he bases his remonstrance on the fact that the dismissed presbyters were worthy men who had done their work well. "Ye have removed," said he, "some men of excellent behaviour from the ministry, which they fulfilled blamelessly and with honour."<sup>3</sup> He never hints that they might not turn off men who

<sup>1</sup> Ambrose gloried in the fact. In "Com. in Luc.," lib. 8, c. 17, we find him saying: "Vos enim mihi estis Parentes, qui Sacerdotium detulistis."

<sup>2</sup> See Socrates, "Hist.," book vi. chap. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xlv.

had disgraced their office or neglected their work. His argument implies that they might. And so Polycarp of Smyrna, in his letter, seems to say that the Church at Philippi had properly dismissed a sinning presbyter named Valens.<sup>1</sup> Cyprian, a century later, took the same view of the Church's power. He praises the Christians of Spain for having refused to acknowledge two bishops, who had saved themselves from persecution by getting sacrificial certificates, and for substituting two better men in their room. He speaks with contempt of another bishop, who had made shipwreck of his faith, and who, "from being a bishop, was no longer even a layman;" and of a deacon who "had abstracted the Church's money," and "disowned the deposits of the widows," and was now a fugitive.<sup>2</sup> Passing from specific instances to general principles, he declares that a people, "obedient to the Lord's precepts," had "the power either of choosing worthy priests or of rejecting unworthy ones."<sup>3</sup>

Such are the sentiments of the orthodox and High Church Cyprian; but still laxer opinions were found among those who were regarded as heretics. Tertullian mentions some people who were constantly changing their ministers from mere caprice. "At one time," says he, "they put novices in office, at another men who are bound to some secular employment. . . . And so it comes to pass that to-day one man is their bishop, to-morrow another: to-day he is a deacon

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xi.<sup>2</sup> Epist. 48.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 67.

who to-morrow is a reader ; to-day he is a presbyter who to-morrow is a layman. For even on laymen do they impose the functions of priesthood.”<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, not yet a Montanist, was disquieted because of this ; but it seems to be simply a survival of a more primitive time, when ecclesiastical orders were not so well marked as they afterwards became. Dr. Hatch quotes a Galatian inscription of A.D. 461, which commemorates one who had been presbyter *twice*,<sup>2</sup> as if he had been elected only for a limited term, and re-elected, like the old Roman consuls, and also like the more modern elders of John Knox’s “First Book of Discipline.”<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of the indelibility of orders was not yet developed—it was far in the future. But the process of evolution which was to bring it about was begun ; and in the fifth century an African council enacted that “no parish should excommunicate its clergymen.”

II. My second proposition is that the primitive office-bearers of the Church did not form a caste or class by themselves, distinct from the other members of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> “De Præscrip. Hæreticorum,” cap. xli.

<sup>2</sup> “The Organisation,” etc., Lect. v. p. 137, *note*. The inscription is to be found in “Corp. Inscript. Græc.,” No. 9259. The words are—*δις γενόμενος πρεσβύτερος*.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. x. 3. “The election of elders and deacons ought to be made every year once . . . lest of long continuance of such offices men presume upon the liberty of the Kirk. . . . And yet it hurteth not that one be received in office more years than one, so that he be appointed yearly thereto by common and free election.

Seeing they were elected by the people, and might any time be dismissed by the people, this proposition may be regarded as already proved. But there are other and stronger proofs.

We have already seen how the Church originated in the synagogue; of how some synagogues accepted the Christian doctrine and became churches. Now, the officials of the synagogue—unlike those of the temple—were taken from the people, continued to live among the people, carried on their trades as before,<sup>1</sup> wore no peculiar dress, were never supposed to possess any peculiar grace, and were, in every respect, ordinary members of society with wives and families. They were simply men who, from their position, or intelligence, or piety, were thought competent to assist in the synagogue service, and exercise the jurisdiction of the local Sanhedrin, and were appointed to do so. The officials of the Church, for at least two hundred years, occupied exactly the same position. Some of them were weavers, some smiths, some bankers, some shepherds; some of them were freedmen, and some were slaves.<sup>2</sup> They exercised

<sup>1</sup> See Hausrath's "New Testament Times—The Synagogue," vol. i. pp. 91, 92. "To have learned some handicraft was an absolute necessity for the Rabbi." . . . "Every Rabbi had to provide for himself by the work of his hands. Rabbi Hillel was a day-labourer, Rabbi Joshua was a needle-maker, Rabbi Isaac a smith, Rabbi Judah a baker, Rabbi Simeon a carpet-maker, Rabbi Jochanan a shoemaker, and Paul a weaver of goats' hair."

<sup>2</sup> The "Apostolical Constitutions" lay down the law on this point. "We do not permit slaves to be ordained into the clergy without their



their crafts as before, and were indistinguishable from the crowd during the day ; but when the evening came on their meeting-days, they hurried to their obscure meeting-place and gave such humble help as they could in receiving new converts by baptism, joining in the Lord's Supper, explaining the new doctrines to learners, or giving advice as to the management of the society. Very ordinary-looking men most of them were in their everyday tunics ; but they had a strange light in their eye, for they were having visions of coming judgment and glory. The second coming of Christ was at hand.

In the Pauline Churches, as we have already seen, matters were in a still more inorganic condition. In these there were, for a time at least, no specially appointed officials at all. Every one helped according to his ability. In their meetings every one took a part. The possession of a gift, real or supposed, was the only qualification for exercising it. Women only, according to Eastern ideas, were forbidden to speak.<sup>1</sup> This may appear strange to us, living amid the order and decorum which have been stiffening for eighteen hundred years, but nothing was more natural to men and women accustomed to the free and easy manner.

masters' consent ; for this would grieve those that owned them. . . . But if at any time a slave appears worthy to be ordained into a high office, such as our Onesimus appeared to be, and if his master allows of it, and gives him his freedom and dismisses him from his house, let him be ordained."—Book viii. 82.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv.



of the synagogue, assembled in a private house in little meetings of twenty or thirty persons, most of them poor and ignorant, but all bursting with enthusiasm. At these meetings, without presbyter, bishop, or deacon, or official of any kind, converts were baptized,<sup>1</sup> the Lord's Supper eaten—sometimes, it must be acknowledged, amid confusion, gluttony, and drunkenness<sup>2</sup>—and discipline exercised.<sup>3</sup> In these Apostolic Churches we have a whole service of prayer, praise, and preaching, the sacraments, and excommunication, arranged and managed by the whole society, with Apostolic sanction, even by Apostolic command.

All this must have been well known to the Church at Jerusalem. There was frequent intercourse between the two cities. There were Jewish spies watching the Gentile Christians, and reporting their doings. And yet when the so-called synod met at Jerusalem no fault was found. Matters which now seem infinitely little were made the subject of debate; these matters, which in the eyes of many now are so infinitely great, were never alluded to. Indirectly, but very decisively, the Synod sanctioned them by its silence, and even went further, by joining the whole brethren with them in their deliberations, and making their letter to run in the name of “the apostles, presbyters, and brethren,” to their brethren among the Gentiles, although their decision affected matters both of doctrine and discipline.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. i. 14-16.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 20, 34.    <sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. v. 1-7, 13.    <sup>4</sup> Acts xv.

By the time the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral Epistles were written the Gentile Churches had organised themselves so far as to have appointed office-bearers. All societies tend to this : they can scarcely be carried on otherwise, especially if their members be numerous and they have money at their disposal. But these officials were at first merely "leading men,"<sup>1</sup> "presidents,"<sup>2</sup> "presbyters," after the manner of the synagogue; "bishops," after the fashion of the bishops who took charge of the affairs of the numerous voluntary associations which existed at that time throughout Greece and Italy. Upon them was principally laid the burden of managing the congregational affairs and conducting the sacramental and other services, but they did so merely as the delegates of the community, and for the sake of order; and it was not supposed that this delegation of authority prevented any member from administering either the word or the sacrament, especially when a presbyter was not at hand. The "Apostolic Constitutions," which probably belong to the end of the second century, notwithstanding their precocious ritualism, acknowledge the right of all competent persons to teach in the Church.<sup>3</sup> Hilary, the Roman deacon, says that in early times all Christians were used to preach and to baptize.<sup>4</sup> Every one knows how Origen preached,

<sup>1</sup> Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν. Hebrews xiii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr, "1 Apology," chap. lxvii.

<sup>3</sup> "Apostolical Constitutions," viii. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Ambrosiaster (Hilary) in "Ephes." iv.

even before a bishop, when he was only a catechist.<sup>1</sup> Ignatius, notwithstanding his high assertion of ecclesiastical authority, considers that any one, with the bishop's authority, might administer the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> Justin tells us that in his day the president of the meeting prayed and distributed the sacramental bread, without saying whether he was a presbyter or not.<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, notwithstanding his occasional vehemence, lays down the rule in this matter with great sobriety and sense. "It is the authority of the Church . . . which has established the difference between the Order (the clergy) and the laity. Accordingly, where there is no joint session of the ecclesiastical Order,<sup>4</sup> you offer, you baptize, and are priest alone for yourself. But where three are, a church is, albeit they be laics."<sup>5</sup> In plain language that means, that all church authority comes from the Church, and that where there does not happen to be a clergyman, a layman may baptize and administer the Eucharist. Tertullian interdicts only those who have been twice married—a rule which would strike out a good many of our modern ministers with high apostolical pretensions. In his "Treatise on Baptism"

<sup>1</sup> This was subsequently made a subject of complaint, not that he preached, but that he, a layman, preached in the presence of a bishop.

<sup>2</sup> "Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist which is [administered] either by the bishop or by one to whom he has entrusted it." ("Ad Smyrn.," chap. viii.)

<sup>3</sup> "1 Apology," chap. lxvii.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Lightfoot translates this—No bench of clergy. "On the Christian Ministry," p. 255.

<sup>5</sup> "De Exhort. Castitatis," vii.

he asserts still more emphatically the right of the laity to baptize in the absence of a cleric.<sup>1</sup>

But Tertullian had, at this time at any rate, his limit, beyond which he would not go. He would not go further than Paul had done. Speaking of some heretics who had transgressed this limit, he breaks out: "The very women of these heretics, how wanton they are! For they are bold enough to teach, to dispute, to enact exorcisms, to undertake cures, it may be even to baptize."<sup>2</sup> At a subsequent period of his life, when Maximilla and Priscilla appeared to him as "holy prophetesses,"<sup>3</sup> by whom the true gospel was preached, and when he could gravely tell of "a sister of ours" who had "ecstatic visions amid the sacred rites of the Lord's Day in the church," conversing with angels and seeing the Lord, and reporting everything to him afterwards, and more especially of how she had seen "a soul in a bodily shape," "soft

<sup>1</sup> "The chief priest (who is the bishop) has the right, in the next place the presbyters and deacons, yet not without the bishop's authority. . . . Besides these even laymen have the right; for what is equally received can be equally given. Unless bishops or presbyters or deacons be on the spot, disciples are called (to this work)." ("De Baptismo," xvii.)

<sup>2</sup> "De Præscrip. Hæreticorum," xli. The "Apostolical Constitutions" discourage baptism by women, but do not absolutely prohibit it. "As to women's baptizing, we let you know there is no small peril to those that undertake it. Therefore we do not advise you to it, for it is dangerous, or rather wicked and impious." The historical reason given for this opinion is very curious. "For if baptism were to be administered by women, certainly our Lord would have been baptized by his own mother, and not by John" (iii. 9).

<sup>3</sup> "De Exhort. Castitatis," x.; "De Jejuniis," i.

and transparent, and of an ethereal colour,"<sup>1</sup> Tertullian would probably have spoken with more bated breath regarding the bold heretical women who had offended his early sense of propriety. But be this as it may, the one quotation as well as the other shows that the original liberty, instead of having been everywhere suppressed after two hundred years, had rather, in some cases, grown into licentiousness. It is also interesting to note that baptism by women, now recognised in the most sacerdotal of all churches—the Roman—originated among heretics, and was thought almost incredible by Tertullian.<sup>2</sup>

But there are many indications that long before the beginning of the third century, when Tertullian wrote, the clergy were gradually shutting out the people from all participation in the government, discipline, and services of the Church. The bishop had risen above the presbyters, the presbyters above the deacons, the deacons above the inferior orders which had come into existence, and all the three had exalted themselves above the people. The dreams of the pseudo-Ignatius were being realised. We see this in the terms, clergy and laity, which were now coming into use. The word "laity," indeed, occurs in the epistle of Clement of Rome as opposed to the Jewish priesthood, but the word "cleros," or clergy, as

<sup>1</sup> "De Anima," ix.

<sup>2</sup> Firmilian, in his "Epistle to Cyprian" (lxxiv.), speaks with horror of a woman who both baptized and celebrated the Eucharist.

applied to the ministers of the Church, was as yet unknown. It came gradually and increasingly into use in the writings of Irenæus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Cyprian. Let us see the origin and meaning of the words.

Both words have their root in the Greek language—*κληρος*, signifying “lot” or “inheritance,” and *λαός*, signifying “people.” Let us next see their Biblical usage. In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (Deut. ix. 29) we have the words, *Οὗτοι λαός σου καὶ κληρος σου*—“They are thy people and thine inheritance;” or, as it really might be rendered more literally according to modern phraseology, “They are thy laity and thy clergy”—both the terms, afterwards so differentiated, being applied to the same individuals. In the New Testament the word *κληρος* occurs frequently, but, as applied to persons, only once. It is in 1 Peter v. 3, *μηδ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων, ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου*—“Neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock.”<sup>1</sup> Now, here we find the flock, the people, the laity described as the *κληρος*, or clergy, to give the word its modern meaning. The presbyters are told not to lord it over the “cleros,” by which word is undoubtedly meant the laity. It is clear, then, there is no Biblical authority, from the usage of the root words, for the

<sup>1</sup> The translation here given is as usual from the Revised Version.



distinction between clergy and laity. And yet the distinction, as we shall see, had probably a Biblical origin.

The words came into use, and how? Jerome tells us that the ministers of religion were called clergy because they are the lot and portion of the Lord, or because the Lord is their inheritance.<sup>1</sup> If this be the true idea contained in the term, in the assumption of it there is betrayed the seminal feeling out of which grew all the arrogance and exclusiveness of the ecclesiastical order, making the Christian ministry as truly a caste as the priests of Jerusalem or the Brahmins of Bengal. But notwithstanding the ancient and high authority of Jerome, others think that the name arose from the custom—though never very common—of choosing candidates for the sacred office by lot. Bishop Lightfoot, who holds this opinion, points out that in its earliest usage, “cleros” designates the office and not the person chosen to it, and that in the progress of language the transition from the office to the office-holder was natural and easy.<sup>2</sup> I am inclined to think Bishop Lightfoot is right. Words grow into their meanings, rather than assume them at the bidding of any one. It may indeed be said that the lot was so seldom used in ecclesiastical elections at the time when “cleros” was beginning to be used to de-

<sup>1</sup> Hieron., “Epist. 2 ad Nepot.”—“Cleros græcè, Sors Latinè appellatur; propterea vocantur clerici, vel quia de Sorte sunt Domini, vel quia ipse Dominus sors, id est pars clericorum.” See also Bingham, book i. chap. v., where a great deal of information on the subject will be found.

<sup>2</sup> “The Christian Ministry,” pp. 247, 248.



signate the clergy, that it could not originate the term ; but there were the tradition and the Biblical references. At this day we speak of our lot and our allotted share, though the lot has really nothing to do with it.

So the two terms came into use. When presbyters and deacons were ruling the Church, it was natural there should be a generic term to discriminate them from the members. In the ordinary growth of language, to meet human requirements, it was certain a term would appear. The words clergy and laity are still found convenient, and can hardly be avoided even by those who dislike the distinction they are used to indicate. For convenience sake we sometimes speak of laymen, to indicate those who are outside of the other learned professions as well as the theological ; and, more curious still, the artist speaks of a lay-figure—a thing of buckram and wood—in contradistinction to a living model. But all the same the constant use of the distinguishing terms helped to widen the distance between the office-bearers and ordinary members of the Church ; and when men began to give St. Jerome's derivation to "cleros," we need not wonder that a still more insolent but less erudite ecclesiastic, in an after age, derived "laic," not from *λαός*, people, but from *λâas*, a stone—as if the laity were but blocks and stones in the presence of the clergy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Campbell's "Lectures on Ecclesiastical History," Lecture ix. With greater philological accuracy the Greek *Ἰδιῶται*, sometimes applied to the laity, or private persons, would be rendered "idiots."

There were other forces at work widening the distance between the clergy and laity. The increase of the Christian societies increased the power and importance of their ministers, while it lessened the influence of the individual members. Moreover, men who would speak in a meeting of fifteen or twenty friends would not open their mouths in a great gathering of two or three hundred people. And the enthusiasm of the first days was gone. The whole service and management of the Church was, therefore, left more and more with the regular officials. We must also remember that the converts would naturally transfer to the ministers of the new faith some of the veneration with which they had regarded the priests, augurs, and haruspices of the old religion. And the bishops and presbyters were now, in some respects at least, more entitled to this honour; for many of them were now educated men, trained perhaps in some of the catechetical schools which had sprung up in connection with the Church, if not proselytes, like Justin Martyr, from the Academy or the Porch. But more powerful than all these causes was the superstitious reverence with which the sacraments were now being regarded. The clergy gradually monopolised the administration of these; and, as the sole dispensers of the favours of heaven, came to be regarded as a kind of superior beings; a result which has been realised in the history of all religions.

But there came a reaction, as was to be expected.

Montanism arose and spread like a fever. There are always some earnest dreamy souls who rebel against a religion of petrified forms, inventoried dogmas, and stiff-backed priests. Such was the rebellion against the Laudian liturgies and the Westminster dogmatics in the seventeenth century, when the Quakers and other Puritans sprang up like reeds by the river. Such is the rebellion against the dressed-up Ritualism and smoke-dried dogmatism of the present day, which we see in the little Plymouth communities scattered over the land, dispensing with creeds, ministers, forms, everything. And such was Montanism in the third century—an honest, though fanatical, endeavour after a simpler and more spiritual religion—a reversion to more primitive times. It had its most illustrious convert in the eloquent and impassioned Tertullian, whose tendency, in some points, to High Churchism melted away under its warm breath, and whose later utterances are therefore sometimes inconsistent with his earlier ones. One of the greatest of the Fathers, he is not ranked among the saints because of his connection with this reputed heresy. Leaving out of view Montanus and his parasite prophetesses, the movement was in the main good; but it failed; for authority was too strong to be shivered by enthusiasm, and the majority of men, in matters of religion, like to lean upon others; but it left behind it not only its memory, but some marks of its presence and power.

When Christianity became the religion of the

empire the distance between the clergy and laity was still more increased. Some of the Christian Basilicas now rivalled the Pagan temples. To minister in one of these was different from ministering to a handful of poor people in an upper room in a private house. The clergy began to accumulate property and to enjoy revenues independent of their people. Moreover, certain civil jurisdictions were bestowed upon them by the emperors, with exemptions from some State taxes and State duties. They were a privileged class. Regarded as the leaders and exemplars of Christian opinion, a higher, or at least more ascetic, rule of life was imposed upon them than upon the laity. They must not be seen in the amphitheatre. A first marriage was questionable, a second marriage was horrible. All luxury in living, all ostentation in dress, must be avoided. Thus they became more and more a class by themselves. Many of them, however, still followed secular employments, and they had often influence enough to secure trade privileges or monopolies for themselves from a friendly Government. Engaged as money-changers, physicians, or shipwrights during the week, they discharged the sacred duties of their office on the Sundays, like those Methodist bishops still occasionally met with in the United States of America.<sup>1</sup>

The bishops of the great cities were raised far

<sup>1</sup> It was not till the fifth century that it was felt to be incongruous for a man to be at the same time a trader and a bishop. A canon of the Council of Chalcedon forbidding the clergy to engage in farming or trading is sometimes quoted, but it is of doubtful authenticity.

above the heads of their people by their wealth and influence, and they affected the ways of the Roman proconsuls and grandees. When they showed themselves in their cathedral churches they sat upon a throne or bench like magistrates dispensing justice. When they walked abroad they were followed by a retinue of attendants. They had great troops of inferior clergy always at their beck. They were styled Most Blessed, Most Reverend, Most Holy. George of Cappadocia, who is thought by some to be the original of St. George of England, is a specimen of the bad, ambitious prelate of the fourth century. The son of a fuller, he made rich by fraud in a contract he had for supplying the imperial armies with pork. His wealth procured him friends, and his worldly wisdom made him embrace Arianism, then the religion of the emperor and the court. When Athanasius was driven from Alexandria, the fraudulent army contractor was consecrated its bishop. He entered the city like a conqueror and reigned like a tyrant. The populace could not stand his exactions, and rising in their hot rage massacred him and some of his sycophants. The murdered man at once became an Arian martyr, and a hundred years afterwards an orthodox saint; and in the ignorant myths of the Middle Ages the pork-butcher and bishop was transmuted into the chivalrous St. George—the patron saint of England; and the dragon he slew was none other than Athanasius and his trinitarian creed.

By the fifth century the clergy were in every essential respect a caste. They were now beginning to be distinguished by their tonsure and their dress, though their changes of raiment were not so extensive as they afterwards became. They were taken neither from "Aaron's wardrobe nor the Flamens' vestry"<sup>1</sup> as many have supposed, but from the everyday clothing of Roman peasants and northern barbarians, retained by the clergy when they had ceased to be worn by the laity.<sup>2</sup> Martin of Tours, however, in his Gallic province, could consecrate the Eucharistic elements in a sheepskin coat and with his bare arms projecting from the fur. It was not till the eighth century that any special dress was prescribed, but the usage was earlier than the legal prescription.<sup>3</sup> The majority of the clergy were now celibate—it was hardly decent to be married. Monkish manners and ideas were everywhere prevalent. The increase of ignorance promoted the growth of superstition, and the

<sup>1</sup> Milton.

<sup>2</sup> In Stanley's "Christian Institutions," chap. viii., will be found many interesting particulars regarding the origin of ecclesiastical vestments. The alb was the *camisia* or chemise, white then as it is now, and was the dress of the humble deacon who worked in his shirt. The surplice was a long shirt worn over an under garment of fur—super-pellicium, over-fur or surplice. The archbishop's pall is a vestige of the Roman *pallium*—it was the band which held it together. The stole was an overcoat worn by the Greeks, afterwards a long vest worn by Roman matrons when at home; and in the ninth century it degenerated into an orarium or handkerchief. See also Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities."

<sup>3</sup> Stanley, *ut supra*; Hatch's "Organisation," etc., p. 163, *note*.



growth of superstition was every day adding to the veneration with which the clergy were regarded ; and the clergy encouraged this by their asceticism and isolation. The piety of Theodosius sanctioned and accelerated the movement. Constantine had recognised Christianity, Theodosius destroyed paganism. By the force of these surroundings the bishops acquired an influence which overtopped all secular authority and constituted them a race of beings by themselves. They were spoken of as vicars of Christ, as princes of the people, as patriarchs, as popes. Princes and people alike bowed their heads before them to receive their benediction, and humbly kissed their hand. In some cases the populace went further, and sang hosannas before them, though Jerome modestly thought this was going a little too far.<sup>1</sup> The great Theodosius underwent a humiliating penance at the bidding of St. Ambrose. An empress waited upon St. Martin at table. The Emperor Maximus at a banquet handed the wine-cup first to this same bishop, and he, after drinking himself, handed it on to his presbyter as being greater than the greatest of the grandees at the table.<sup>2</sup> The inroads of the barbarians and the breaking up of

<sup>1</sup> Hieron in Matt. 21 ; Bingham, book. ii. chap. ix.

<sup>2</sup> In the "Apostolic Constitutions" we have the first development of this idea. "By how much the soul is more valuable than the body, so much the priestly office is beyond the kingly." If the "Constitutions" really belong to the close of the second century this is certainly a very early assertion of clerical pretensions. It looks more like the arrogance and assumption of the fifth and following centuries.



the empire left the clergy as the only representatives of the old civilisation. They remained like islands above the flood when everything else was submerged. They profited immensely by this, for the savages received the faith of the races they had vanquished, mingled it with their northern superstitions, gave great grants of confiscated land to the bishops, and venerated them as demigods. These were changed days from the time when Peter made his living as a fisherman, and Paul worked as a weaver of tent cloth. The bishop of Trimithuntis no longer herded sheep on the hillside;<sup>1</sup> no more did the bishop of Majuma sit at his loom as a weaver of linen: these types of primitive episcopacy had become extinct,<sup>2</sup> and in their place had grown up a race of lordly prelates who jostled with emperors for power and place—the true ancestors of the Pope who kept a Kaiser standing for three days as a suppliant at his door. It shows the power of a living idea warmed, fostered, modified by its environment.

But were not these artisan-plebeian bishops as truly bishops as any prince-bishop of mediæval Milan or Cologne? and were they not, by virtue of their ordination, separated from the people by being put in the possession of apostolic, consecrating grace?

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, "Eccles. Hist." i. 12; case of Spyridon in fourth century.

<sup>2</sup> Sozomen, "Eccles. Hist." vii. 28; case of Zeno in fifth century. See also Hatch's "Organisation," etc., pp. 151, 163.

Undoubtedly they were as truly bishops as any of their more brilliant successors—in some respects more so; but it was never supposed that their ordination, if they were ordained, constituted them a caste, with the exclusive power of transmitting the caste character. It was simply the ceremony by which they were admitted to their office. There were such forms for admission to civil as well as ecclesiastical offices, and the same words were often used to indicate both. It was never supposed that any special virtue was thereby instilled into the civil magistrate; why should it be thought that any such virtue was infused into the ecclesiastical ruler? The laying-on of hands is the form which has prevailed in the Western Church, but it was not the only form used in primitive times. Breathing upon the person was common in the East, as it was supposed that in this way the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost was conveyed.<sup>1</sup> Conducting the bishop-elect to his chair was another method of admission.<sup>2</sup> Handing to him a crosier was another way practised in the Celtic Churches.<sup>3</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> Dean Stanley says: "In the Alexandrian and Abyssinian Churches it was and still is by breathing; in the Eastern Church generally by lifting up the hands in the ancient Oriental attitude of benediction; in the Armenian Church, and also at times in the Alexandrian Church, by the dead hand of the predecessor; in the early Celtic Church by the transmission of relics or pastoral staff; in the Latin Church by the form of touching the head." ("Institutions," chap. x.)

<sup>2</sup> So it was in the case of Bishop Fabianus related above, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup> "When Eadmer, a Canterbury monk, was chosen Bishop of St. Andrews, after some dispute with the Scottish king Alexander I. about

in some cases there appears to have been no form at all, beyond the election. And what was meant by the imposition of hands in cases where it was used? Simply the conveying a blessing or a good wish. It was a well-known custom among the Jews, and employed on occasions civil, social, scholastic, and ecclesiastic. When a scholar graduated, to use a modern phrase, the Rabbis laid their hands on his head, as the chancellor of a university now touches the graduate's head with the graduate's cap. When the prophets at Antioch despatched Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey they laid their hands on them and prayed. When an elder in the primitive Church visited a sick brother he laid his hands on him and prayed. When a new presbyter, or deacon, or deaconess was admitted to office in the Church his brother presbyters laid their hands on his head and prayed. In the age of miracles it was sometimes thought the gift of miracles was conferred in this way, but it was conferred without distinction of classes, and sometimes without any form at all.

III. The presbyter-bishops of the Church were in no sense priests.

It is true priest is but a contraction of presbyter. But without reference to the origin of the word I take ordination, he took the episcopal ring from the king and the crosier from off the altar, as receiving it from the Lord, and began his work. But he had scruples of conscience about the whole business, and after a time returned to England."—Hailes' "Annals," vol. i.; Cunningham's "Church History," vol. i.

it, as it is now generally understood, as indicating one who offers sacrifice—the English equivalent of “sacerdos” and *ἱερεὺς*; and it is in that sense I affirm the ministers of the primitive Church were not priests.

In not one instance is the term priest (*ἱερεὺς*) applied in Gospel, Epistle, or Apocalypse, to an office-bearer of the new church. The Apostles recognised the old hereditary priesthood, and had no idea of setting up a rival one. They were filled with a grander idea—they proclaimed the universal priesthood of mankind. Every man was a priest in his own family. Every man must individually offer his own sacrifices of prayer, good deeds, and gratitude. In one sense every man was to be raised to the dignity of a priest; in another sense every priest was to be brought down to the level of the people. Saturated, as the minds of the writers of the New Testament must have been, with ideas taken from the temple service, we need not wonder that their compositions are deeply coloured with these—that references to sacrifice, expiation, altars, priests, victims, are frequent—that they express sometimes their new religious doctrines by the use of their old religious terms; but they uniformly declare that all these things belonged to an economy which was doomed to pass away. The words of Jesus to the Samaritan woman are the finest utterance of the new doctrine, and it runs with less or more clearness through the writings of St. Paul. No place was more holy than

another, no altar or priest was longer necessary. A spiritual worship, without form or ceremony, was the new development in the religious history of mankind. And a great step it was in human progress. We know the outside world could not understand such a religion—a religion without temple, altar, sacrifice, or priest, and they concluded the Christians were atheists. And many good Christians have since being counted worse than infidels for the same reason.

We have already seen that the Church originated in the synagogue, and not in the temple, and that its officials were the synagogue officials. Before the destruction of the temple it would have been regarded as impious on the part of any lay Jew to pretend he was a priest—one of the hereditary caste. But without presumption any official of any religious sect might assume the name and the duties of an elder of the synagogue. How could the Apostles be priests when they had no altar and no sacrifice? “In the synagogue,” it has been well said, “there was no altar, in the temple there was no pulpit.” The function of the Apostles was to preach and not to sacrifice, and so of their successors.

Two hundred years required to come and go before the Church was deeply infected by sacerdotalism. But it was sure to come, and symptoms of its coming are visible, though faintly, almost from the first. The whole environment was sacerdotal. There were temples

and altars everywhere—victims everywhere bleeding, incense everywhere smoking. The whole religious conceptions of mankind were associated with these; the whole religious vocabulary was formed from these. It was impossible for a small sect living amid such influences to escape their contagion. They might for a time, as the Christians did for nearly two hundred years, but they were sure to absorb some of the subtle poison in the end.

The converts, as a matter of course, brought many of their old religious impressions with them. The Jews, it is true, were more familiar with the synagogue than the temple; but the temple was much more fitted to impress their imagination. When they had made their pilgrimage from one of the remote provinces, and beheld its columned courts, and priests, and levites, and altars, and great crowd of worshippers, it was a scene never to be forgotten. And, besides, all their sacred literature was connected with the temple and not with the synagogue. It was for the service of the temple the Mosaic ritual was given, it was for the music of the temple the psalms were written, it was of the glory of the temple the prophets spoke. Even after the temple was destroyed this sacred literature survived, and kept alive in the Hebrew heart an ever-increasing veneration for the ruined fane. Its very dust became dear to them. Everything was now seen through the glorifying haze of the sunset, for Israel's sun had indeed



gone down. Thinking of the city over the impending fall of which Jesus Himself had wept, poring over the scroll of Deuteronomy, the converted Jew could not but transfer to the Christian presbyter the ideas which he had been taught to associate with the priest, more especially when the presbyter had risen above the level of the mechanic. We know how much of Judaism is still imbedded in the heart of Christianity, and we need not wonder that sacerdotalism should have found a place.

After the first century the great mass of converts were gathered in from the Gentile cities. They brought into the Church a still more decided sacerdotalism. They had no synagogues; they had only temples. And their temples were everywhere. Even where there was no temple, there were altars in the open air. Their whole religion consisted of sacrifice. Their whole social life was associated with sacrifice. Apart from sacrifice they had no idea of any way in which Deity could be propitiated. Of course, they learned a better way when they accepted the Christian creed. But they could not forget all they had ever learned or heard or seen before. The first converts, joining the Church, as they must have done, from sincere conviction, may have shaken off the greater part of their old heathenism. But when Christianity became fashionable, when many joined the Church because others did so, or from motives still more sordid, they must have imported into the



Church not only the usages of the temple, but a lingering love for them. We must look, moreover, to the effect which the surrounding sacerdotalism must have had upon the Christian bishops and presbyters. If ambition ever entered their hearts, if they had any love for imposing spectacles, any desire to serve themselves heirs to a race who had so long held in their hands the souls of men, they must sometimes, in their secret hearts, have envied the priests in their temples. Human nature is frail even in its best estate.

In such circumstances there was an inevitable action and reaction between heathenism and Christianity. Heathenism was modified by Christianity; Christianity could not but be modified by the surrounding heathenism. No religion ever altogether perishes. It may be absorbed by a more powerful religion, or be purified, and pass away from sight; but it continues to exist. As vestiges of the lower organism can be traced in the higher; vestiges of heathenism can still be traced in Christianity. We know how pagan temples became Christian churches, how pagan deities became Christian saints, how pagan festivals became Christian holidays. By the same process, but by reversion rather than progression, Christian presbyters became pagan priests. There was development in worldly status and power; reversion in true religious position.

There were some circumstances which specially

conduced to this. The sacraments were the chief of these. When baptism was regarded as synonymous with regeneration, and the sacramental bread and wine looked upon as the very body and blood of Christ, it was difficult not to ascribe sacerdotal power to the man who dispensed these heavenly blessings. The sacrament was on the eve of becoming the sacrifice.

Tertullian, notwithstanding his Montanism, is the first Christian writer who is fond of speaking of bishops and presbyters as priests.<sup>1</sup> The words occur frequently in his writings, even when his Montanism had become pronounced. But it is this same Tertullian who held that the ministerial office came from the congregation, and that in the absence of a presbyter or a bishop any one might baptize or administer the sacrament of the Supper. It is impossible, therefore, to believe that he thought the clergy possessed any special sacerdotal power. The secret of his frequent use of the terms priest and sacrifice seems rather to be that he strongly believed in the priesthood of all Christians, and that if the priestly function was usually performed only by the clergy, that depended entirely on the authority of the Church, and had arisen from the necessity for order and subordination. As a Montanist he believed in

<sup>1</sup> In the "Apostolical Constitutions" bishops are styled high priests (book viii. 6). It is doubtful whether the "Constitutions" or the writings of Tertullian are the earlier. The "Constitutions" have certainly interpolations of later date.

spiritual gifts and miraculous mental manifestations, in women as well as men, and in fact occupied such a position in the ancient Church as John Wesley and George Whitefield occupied in the Church of the eighteenth century. Such a believer in the free outpouring of the Holy Spirit could scarcely hold that that same spirit flowed only in a sacerdotal channel. We therefore conclude he was not a sacerdotalist in the usual sense of that word.

We have to pass over nearly half a century before we get from Tertullian to Cyprian, who is generally regarded as the chief patron of sacerdotalism in the Ante-Nicene Church. It must be acknowledged that the whole phraseology of the system is to be found in his writings. Priest, altar, sacrifice, are words of frequent occurrence. But this is the same Cyprian who held that the laity should elect their clergy, and might any time degrade them; and that an election or ordination was not properly conducted unless done in the presence of the people. He does not lay claim to any special sacerdotal grace, but simply speaks of himself as a bishop by the judgment of God and the suffrage of the people.<sup>1</sup> He speaks of election and ordination indiscriminately, though he recognises the imposition of hands.<sup>2</sup> His sacerdotalism seems to be a matter of words rather than of anything else, and is easily explained. His mind was full of the Hebrew Scriptures, which were, in his day, more the text-books

<sup>1</sup> Epist. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. 67.

of the Church than the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, which were still struggling for catholic recognition. He quotes them copiously; and how could he quote them without introducing priests, altars, and sacrifices? How could he reason from them without applying these terms to the ministers and officers of the new faith? The writer of the Hebrews had already done the same thing. Paul had done it. It was almost impossible for a writer of that period to avoid it. It was the current vocabulary both in the Jewish and Gentile worlds. It has come down to our day, and our religious thinking is more largely tinged with it than we imagine. We show ourselves unable or unwilling to strip off the figure and get at the simple fact which lies beneath it. How, then, could it be otherwise with a North African bishop in the third century, with his imagination inflamed by the sacred traditions of the temple, breathing an atmosphere of sacerdotalism, accustomed from his childhood to its language, and struggling hard to supplant Paganism by a pliant Christianity, which, in the spirit of Paul, did not insist upon anathematising all the previous customs and much less the previous vocabulary of the people? Under these accommodating influences bishop, patriarch, and pope became the *Summus Sacerdos*, and even *Pontifex-Maximus*; the presbyter became the *sacerdos*.<sup>1</sup> The sacrament of the Eucharist

<sup>1</sup> This sacerdotalism crops out in the "Apostolical Constitutions." Thus in book viii. sect. 5, we have the following:—"Being taught

was now a sacrifice. But though Cyprian used, to some extent, the language of sacerdotalism, and exhibited some of its pretentiousness, he was very far from having fully formulated the doctrine. That was still in the far future. The germ idea had been planted even before his day, and now it was but the slender sapling, though destined to become some centuries afterwards a great tree—unfortunately not a tree bearing fruit for the healing of the nations, but rather a upas-tree, with deadly fragrance and shade. When, within cathedral and parish church, priests in white vestments erected altars and offered sacrifice and gave absolution, defeated Paganism had, in fact, vanquished victorious Christianity, and under a new form reigned in Christendom.<sup>1</sup>

by the Lord the series of things, we distributed the functions of the high priesthood to the bishops, those of the priesthood to the presbyters, and the ministration under them both to the deacons ; that the divine worship might be performed in purity.”

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the best proofs of this are to be found in Dr. Middleton's “ Letters from Rome, showing an exact Conformity between Popery and Paganism, or The Religion of the present Romans derived from that of their Heathen Ancestors.”

In another vein, but containing many striking facts, is a little book entitled, “Modern Christianity a Civilised Heathenism.”

Baden Powell's “Christianity without Judaism” shows how much Judaism still exists in the heart of our Christianity.

## LECTURE III.

### THE CHURCH AS A TEACHER.

WE have seen the Primitive Churches gradually assuming a more and more complex organisation, and their first humble officials separating, according to the exigencies of their work, into deacons, presbyters, and bishops, just as animals and plants, in their ascending types, acquire greater and still greater specialisation and complexity of organ and function. I now wish to discover the work which these officials had to do—not the work of the one order as distinguished from that of the others—but the work which the clergy as a whole had to do, and in which they all took a part. I wish, in fact, having seen the development of the Church's organisation, to look at its institutions, and to trace their gradual growth.

In the passage I have already quoted as letting the first ray of light in upon the meetings of the Christians, it is said they remained steadfastly in the



Apostles' teaching. Here, then, the question presents itself—What is the place which teaching occupies in the Christian Church? What was its origin and growth as an ecclesiastical institution?

In most of the ancient religions teaching had no place at all. In the temples of Greece and Italy there were sacrifices and ritual, but no instruction: there were crowds of priests, but not one instructor. The whole thing consisted in sheep-killing, entrail-inspecting, incense-burning, and augury. All education in religion and morals—all speculation about divine things—was relegated to the schools and the sophists who frequented them. A pontifex-maximus, preaching to the people in the porch of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus regarding the nature of the immortal gods or the destiny of the human soul; a haruspex, speaking to any one but his employers, about a flight of birds or a twist in the viscera of some poor disembowelled beast, was a phenomenon altogether unknown. It was very much the same at Jerusalem. There was the morning and the evening sacrifice; the special offerings for the special occasions; the great slaughter of the paschal feasts; and all the ceremonial of an elaborate temple-service, but there was nothing to educate the religious men and women who came up there to worship. They might or they might not interpret to themselves the symbolism of the pageant they had seen, and in which they had taken a humble part, but in



this they would have no help from the priests, for that was not their function.

It will not be difficult to show that, in strong contrast to this, the Church was designed from the beginning to be a great educational institute. Jesus, the Master, was above everything else a teacher and preacher of righteousness. The Sermon on the Mount, whether we regard it as one connected discourse, or as a collection of His more remarkable sayings, is a most perfect and beautiful exposition of His religion. His many parables were all meant to teach some moral or religious truth. He was universally recognised as a prophet—a revealer of new truths—gifted with deep spiritual insight—greater than Moses, than Elijah, than John. He was never suspected of having anything in common with the priest.

In harmony with His own life-work, the commission which He gave to His Apostles was to go and teach all nations—to make disciples of all men—scholars in the highest sense of scholarship, for they were to be taught in His school His religious conceptions. We know how the Apostles carried out this commission. They did not set about erecting altars, but they went everywhere preaching the Word. In the synagogue on the Sabbath day to sceptical Jews, on Mars Hill to scoffing Greeks, by river-side or sea-shore, in the prætorium of Sergius Paulus at Paphos, in his own hired lodgings at Rome, the great

Apostle, whose life and labours we best know, taught all those who came to him "the things concerning the Lord Jesus." When this first and chief of missionaries could no longer be present in any of those many churches which he had founded by the persuasive power of his living voice, he wrote letters to them containing expositions of his opinions and advices suited to their circumstances; and it was in this way the Pauline Epistles originated, which still remain and claim our reverence not only as the earliest development of the Christian faith, but as, in some respects, the best history of the Apostolic Church. I think, then, I am justified in saying that the Apostles were pre-eminently teachers of Christianity. The commission of their Master, as well as the circumstances in which they were placed, made this imperative.

In accordance with the same dominant idea, when Christian Churches were being organised throughout Asia Minor, and everywhere along the seaboard of the Mediterranean, the men who were placed over them as presbyter-bishops required to have as a qualification aptitude in teaching. "A. bishop," wrote Paul to Timothy, "must be apt to teach;"<sup>1</sup> and they who not only ruled well, but who "laboured in the word and in teaching,"<sup>2</sup> that is, who employed some of their time in instructing the converts in the new faith, were to be regarded as worthy of double

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17.

honour, or, as I think it should be rendered, double pay. And, addressing Timothy himself, the veteran Apostle said, "Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching."<sup>1</sup> That was the main work which was given him to do. But still more remarkable is the declaration of the same Apostle to the Church at Corinth—"Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."<sup>2</sup> He was content to leave to others the initiatory rite by which converts were received into the Church; his higher and diviner work was to make converts, and, after they were made, to instruct them still more perfectly in the doctrines and duties of their new life.

All this you will say arose from the very necessities of the case, and so no doubt it did; but, at the same time, it originated in the fact that the Christian Church had, as I have already shown, its tap-root not in the Jewish temple, but in the Jewish synagogue.

The religious life of the Jews in the time of the Apostles was nourished partly by the temple and partly by the synagogue service: I venture to think in much the larger degree by the latter. There was but one temple, situated in their one holy city; there were synagogues in every town and village of the country, and in every city throughout the world where a colony of Jews existed. It was only at distant intervals that most Jews could visit Jeru-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 13; also 2 Tim. iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. i. 17.

saalem and witness the temple worship ; it is certain there must have been thousands of both men and women, who, from infirmity or other causes, were never able to join in the pilgrimages, and who never once beheld the Beautiful Gate ; but the synagogues were at their door, and open not only on the Sabbaths and feast-days, but also on the Mondays and Thursdays, the two market-days, when the country people brought their fruit to the market and their disputes to the judges. No doubt the Jews were proud of their Holy House ; they delighted in the traditions connected with its ancient sanctities, even when a sceptical Sadduceeism was casting doubt upon their truth ; they gloried in its sacrifices and sacerdotalism, even when many were losing faith in their efficacy, and, like Philo, were seeking for higher religious verities. But this patriotic pride, this love for the legendary, this delight in spectacular pageantry, could be but a poor substitute for piety ; and the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem could do little more than a pilgrimage to Mecca in the month of Dhu'lhajja, or a trip to Rome at the season of the Carnival. The crowds might come and go, and be religiously and morally none the better, but rather the worse for it.

But the synagogues were thoroughly popular institutions, and in every way well designed to diffuse religious information and foster everyday piety. When the people were assembled on their

weekly day of rest (very much as we meet in our churches on a Sunday) the appointed prayers were repeated, the people responding with their Amens; the appropriate psalms were sung, the people joining in the antiphones; and the lessons for the day were read from their sacred books; and in this way a great part of both the law and the prophets was rehearsed in their hearing. But this was not all. The lesson being over, one of the Rabbis made some remarks upon the passage in the way of explanation or enforcement, just as is done in many churches to this day. Even yet the meeting did not necessarily come to a close, for any one who was present might now give utterance to any ideas of his own, and thus in any synagogue on any Sabbath one might hear a thoughtful fisherman or herdsman or carpenter discussing religious questions with the Rabbis. And this was done sometimes with considerable warmth, sometimes even with noise and confusion, as we might infer from the religious temperament of the Jews, and as we actually know from the violent scenes in the synagogues when Jesus and the Apostles availed themselves of this privilege.<sup>1</sup> But still the custom was jealously preserved, and formed an essential part of the system. A system, at once so popular and so free as this, must have kept religious excitement ever quick and living, and at the same time have acted as a counterpoise

<sup>1</sup> See Luke iv. 16-29; also Acts xiii. 15.

to the aristocratic and exclusive sacerdotalism of the temple.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the synagogues were schools of religion for the whole people; and it is probable the boy Jesus got His human learning there. "Our houses of prayer in the several towns," says Philo, "are none other but institutions for teaching prudence and bravery, temperance and justice, piety and holiness, in short, every virtue which the human and the divine recognise and enjoin." "The synagogue," says Hausrath, "was a true school for the nation, and Josephus boasts, with justice, that by its means the law was made the common possession of all; and that while, among the Romans, even procurators and proconsuls had to take those skilled in law with them into their provinces, in the Jewish household every servant-maid knew from the religious service what Moses had ordained in the law."<sup>2</sup>

Even in Gentile lands the synagogues were generally the first starting-points of the Christian Church, and the customs of the one were naturally transferred to the other. The Greeks and Latins, it is true, knew little of the synagogues beyond what they learned from the Christian Jews with whom they associated, but they would devoutly follow their guidance in a religion which had a Jewish origin.

<sup>1</sup> See Prideaux, "The Old and New Testaments Connected;" Hausrath's "New Testament Times;" and Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus."

<sup>2</sup> "New Testament Times—The Synagogue," vol. i. p. 86.



Besides, they had their schools of philosophy in which speculation was ever fresh, and the Church might be looked upon as the school of the new Christian philosophy. Within it there was free discussion of all moral and religious questions; there were speculations subtle enough for the most subtle Eastern mind, practical enough for the most practical Roman mind; there was an esoteric and exoteric doctrine. Everything suggested the school rather than the fane. The very name *ecclesia* suggested a meeting for discussion rather than for sacrifice. It was therefore the Gnostic followers of Carpocrates placed the bust of Jesus beside the busts of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. They ranked them all as great teachers of truth. Thus, then, in the synagogue primarily, and in the Greek schools secondarily, did the Church find its model of an educational institute. Let us shortly trace the history of education in the Church.

I have already quoted the first notice of the Christian meetings in which it is said the converts "continued in the Apostles' teaching."<sup>1</sup> To the same effect is the other brief notice—"And every day in the temple, and at home, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus as the Christ."<sup>2</sup> From these notices, brief though they be, it is quite clear that instruction formed a considerable part of their business when these primitive Christians held their first meetings

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 42.



under some quiet portico of the temple, or in the house of some friend in the city.

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians there is a passage which throws much more light upon these gatherings. "When ye come together," says Paul, "every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation."<sup>1</sup> Here is the synagogue over again: its freeness, its liberty of speech to every one. It was more a meeting for discussing religious questions than for any one, even an apostle, authoritatively imposing his opinion on others. Any one might suggest his favourite psalm, expound his pet doctrine, tell his dream or other revelation, illumine the brethren with his exegetical remarks. That Church at Corinth, though sometimes a little disorderly, as we might expect from its evil surroundings, must have been an excellent school for acquiring religious ideas and the power of expressing them.

From the first the Apostles were seized with the conviction that it was only by preaching they could convert the world. Their simple method was to go to the synagogues on the Sabbath, where all their religiously-inclined countrymen were sure to be gathered together, and taking advantage of the liberty of speech allowed, "they reasoned with them out of the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." When a Rabbi, recently come from Jerusalem or even

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

any part of Judea, appeared in a synagogue in any Gentile city, there was a general expectation that he would speak and communicate the latest religious intelligence.<sup>1</sup> We have no means of knowing what were the oratorical powers of the Twelve, unless it be the speech delivered by Peter on the first Christian Pentecost, and the form in which we have it is obviously imperfect.<sup>2</sup> But Paul, though he sometimes speaks depreciatingly of his own powers of speech, was undoubtedly a great orator. And he knew his power. "Christ," said he, "sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel . . . for the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us that are being saved it is the power of God."<sup>3</sup> The Apostle is here evidently referring to his own oratorical triumphs, and there is a strange mixture of humility and of consciousness of power in what he says.

Human nature was the same eighteen hundred years ago as it is now, and therefore we may be quite sure it was only by powerful and impassioned eloquence that Paul moved the hearts of men wherever he went. Even the sublime truths of Christianity, though then presented for the first time to a world weary of idolatry, would not have awakened the interest they did, unless spoken by a man whose tongue was tipped with fire. There are passages

<sup>1</sup> Edersheim's "Life and Times of Jesus," vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 14-39.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. i. 17, 18.

both in Romans and Corinthians which rise to the height of genuine eloquence ; and we must remember there is always something in eloquence which cannot be committed to paper and handed down from age to age. Look at the published sermons of Whitefield. Are these the sermons that moved all England and America ? that were pronounced, by competent judges, to have transcended all ancient and all modern fame ? We read them, and fail to feel their power. The volatile essence which gave them their aroma and their energy has evaporated and left them stale, flat, and unprofitable.

We must, therefore, bear in mind that the grandest passages in the Pauline writings do not give us an adequate idea of Paul the preacher. He must have been a great preacher—his whole history proves it. There would have been no mobbings at Ephesus if the invectives of the Apostle against magic and idolatry had not roused the whole city. The Areopagites at Athens would not have troubled themselves to listen to the obscure preacher of an obscure faith. Agrippa would not have shown such anxiety to hear Paul plead before him unless he had heard he was a great orator. In tracing the causes of the rapid spread of Christianity, Gibbon omits one of the most powerful—an inspired eloquence.

But Christianity was not spread so fast and so far by the preaching of any one man, however eloquent. There were many humble imitators of the

great Apostle not all eloquent, but all earnest. In those stirring times every one who could preach was not only permitted but encouraged to do so, and this freedom continued so long as the Christian enthusiasm was strong. "Many of the Christians," says Celsus, by way of ridicule and reproach, "without any special calling, watch for all opportunities, and both within and without the temples boldly proclaim their faith. They find their way into the cities and armies, and there having called the people together, harangue them with fanatical gestures."<sup>1</sup>

Let us now take a look at a Christian assembly about the middle of the second century. Justin Martyr enables us to see what is passing there. "On the day called Sunday," says he, "all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read so long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things."<sup>2</sup> Moral and religious education is still, as it was a century before, one of the main objects of the gathering. Let us go down half a century further, and now Tertullian will be our guide. "We assemble," he says, "to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence needful. However it be, in that respect,

<sup>1</sup> Origen, "Contra Celsum," vii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> "1 Apology," 67.

with the sacred words we nourish our faith, we animate our hopes, we make our confidence more steadfast, and no less by inculcations of God's precepts we confirm good habits. In the same place also exhortations are made, rebukes and sacred censures are administered."<sup>1</sup>

But the bishops and presbyters did not confine their teaching to the little group of earnest people who met in their first-day assemblies. They wrote apologies for their faith and refutations of the heresies which had cropped up, and notwithstanding the difficulty of multiplying MS. copies, they managed to make these known far beyond the Christian circle. In a very short time every one, from the Emperor downwards, knew something about the new religion; and if we could penetrate the inner life of the period, we should certainly find that there were discussions in countless coteries regarding the new theological and moral teaching, and the futurity it opened up to the human family. "Almost the entire world," says Origen, "is better acquainted with what Christians preach than with the favourite opinions of philosophers. For who is ignorant of the statement that Jesus was born of a virgin, and that He was crucified, and that His resurrection is an article of faith among many, and that a general judgment is announced to come, in which the wicked are to be punished according to their deserts, and the righteous

<sup>1</sup> "Apologeticus," 39.

to be duly rewarded?"<sup>1</sup> If so it was, less than 200 years after the death of Christ, we can guess how industriously and effectually the Christians had promulgated their tenets, and how largely these were now influencing the thinking of the time.

It is beyond all question that the gospel biographies, and the Epistles of the Apostles, and the apologies of the martyrs, and the preaching of the primitive bishops, gave a great impulse to religious speculation. It imported Jewish earnestness into the midst of easy-going paganism. It brought discussions about "the divine" and "the human," and the relation between them, from the Academy and the Porch, and placed them where they should be in the market-place and the church. Christianity was recognised to be as much a philosophy as a religion. It had doctrines to be studied, known, developed into all their fulness of meaning. Many philosophers left the schools and joined the Church, dissatisfied with the old philosophical solutions of the problems of life. Justin came still wearing his Stoic's gown. Gnosticism — an aiming at a higher knowledge — sprang up, and though it generated in its hot-bed many most grotesque and fantastic fancies, we must not forget that it originated in the sublime endeavour to solve such great questions as the origin of evil under the government of an all-good God, and of

<sup>1</sup> Origen, "Contra Celsum," i. 7.



how the absolute and the infinite can be reconciled with the conditioned and the finite in this gross material universe.

Out of all this fermentation of religious thought arose neo-Platonism. When the priests were unable to save themselves, when their sacrifices and auguries only provoked ridicule, and they were unable to say a word in their defence, the philosophers of Alexandria came to their rescue. To meet the Christian philosophy they invented a philosophy of heathenism. They endeavoured to show that the traditions about the gods were grand myths, pregnant with meaning; that the popular worship, absurd in itself, was symbolical of high religious verities; that we must rise from the conditioned to the absolute, from the seeming to the real; and that it were wrong to abandon an old faith, which, under popular and beautiful forms, contained eternal and immutable truths. Here was the most subtle and skilful defence which paganism had yet thrown up against the assaults of Christianity. It was easy to laugh at the old gods and goddesses — their follies, their amours, their crimes. It was easy to ask if a statue, however cunningly chiselled, could help a man in his time of need. The first apologists of Christianity positively revelled in their ridicule of the popular mythology. But when they were told by Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblicus, and Hypatia that the stories they ridiculed were nothing but myths, but myths



with manifold and beautiful meanings, it was not quite so easy to continue the laugh against the worshippers of Athene or Zeus.

Happily the Church had now enlisted in its ranks men who were able to meet these pagan philosophers on their own ground—men who had the Alexandrian speculativeness combined with Christian faith. The greatest of these was Origen, who, though accused of heresy in his own day, and altogether heterodox according to the standard of ours, did more than any other man to stem the current of reviving paganism, and promote a cultured though somewhat dubious Christianity. After him, and at a considerable distance, Chrysostom and Basil and the two Gregories in the pulpits of the East, and Hippolytus, Ambrose, and Augustine in the Churches of the West, gave the deathblow to the old superstitions, and completed the triumph of the religion of the Nazarene.

The ancient religions, so far as they had a system of beliefs, locked it up in the arcana of their temples, or hid it in the bosoms of their priests. They were mysteries, and not for the profane vulgar. When Christianity brought its system of doctrine out to the market-place and the meeting-house, to be known of all and disputed by all, it was a prodigious development in the religious evolution of the world. It was the beginning of the era of free thought. It was the first stroke of doom to priestcraft. For a time the leaders of the Church had to restrain rather

than excite the crowd of would-be teachers.<sup>1</sup> Probably the gospel, as we now have it, was never more effectively preached than it was by Paul; but there was only one Paul. Eloquence, like poetry and art, is of ancient date, and soon reached its perfection; and thus it happened that the first preacher of Christianity (after Christ Himself) still occupies the foremost place. But when Paul was martyred he left no one behind him who could fill his place; and so sacred eloquence declined. Among the enthusiasts who went about teaching and preaching the new doctrines, no doubt there would be some born orators, but the majority must have been men of a different stamp—blind leaders of the blind—and this is probably one of the causes of the almost universal contempt with which Christianity was regarded by the educated classes in Greece and Italy. But there was earnestness, which is very contagious; and truth, which is very powerful; and a multitude of quiet workers bringing the outcasts of the world and the labourers and heavy-laden into the Church, that there they might find rest and the hope of a fast-coming millennium.

Gradually the first enthusiasm abated, the number of prophets, apostles, and teachers lessened, and the regular office-bearers of the Church, the presbyters—bishops—men who were mainly elected to their

<sup>1</sup> This appears from expressions of both Paul and James already quoted, pp. 21, 22.

offices on account of their educational aptitude—were left to do the teaching and preaching. All experience shows that men trained to a special work, and chosen specially to do it, will do it better than amateurs, unless in a few exceptional cases, where native genius overcomes all difficulties. We may believe, therefore, there would be a gradual development of church education and oratory—in other words, of teaching and preaching—from this time onward. Two things in connection with this are to be specially noted as developments—(1st) The rise of the kind of composition or address called the homily; (2d) The rise of Catechetical schools and Catechumenism (if I may use such a word).

1. THE HOMILY. — The word comes from the Greek *Ὁμιλία*, which means primarily conversation or familiar intercourse. This indicates what the homily originally was—the easy educational intercourse between the presbyter-bishop and his little flock, in which there was probably a considerable mixture of discussion, with questioning and answering on both sides.<sup>1</sup> Gradually the address would

<sup>1</sup> To show how the same methods will naturally, almost necessarily, be employed in similar circumstances, I give the following short extract from a letter of the Reverend G. Cockburn, Ichang, China, of date 9th July 1884:—"The Catechist and myself have preached daily to the heathen, about fifty being an average attendance. In this daily preaching we do not confine ourselves to the delivery of prepared addresses or sermons, but enter freely into conversation with the people. By question and answer, and allowing the utmost freedom of discussion, we endeavour at once to enlist

become more formal as the bishop - presbyter rose above his co-religionists, and as the doctrines of the Church took form and hardened. Thus the word came to indicate generally the discourses delivered in the churches by the Greek Fathers. The same discourses were called by the Latins "*tractatus*," from which come our words tracts and treatises. The Latin "*sermo*" in this sense, from which comes our familiar word sermon, appears to have been of a later usage. But they all indicate the same thing—the expositions of the sacred books, and the discussions of moral and religious subjects delivered either to the catechumens or the baptized, as the case might be.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest example of a homily we have is the composition usually designated the Second Epistle of Clement, but which is now, from internal evidence, regarded not as an epistle but a homily, and not as the composition of Clement, but of some unknown writer in the second century.<sup>2</sup> It has no merit, gives one a mean idea of the preacher, and, what is worse,

the attention and meet the difficulties of the hearers." ("Church of Scotland Mission Record," Nov. 1, 1884.)

<sup>1</sup> "The homilies, which the Latins call treatises, and which we call sermons, were moral instructions upon the Holy Scriptures."—Dupin, "*Eccles. Hist.—On Origen*."

<sup>2</sup> The first complete text of this homily was found by Bryennios (whose learned labours in this field of discovery have been already mentioned), and published in 1875. In the following year a Syriac version of the same text was found by Mr. Bensley. It is given in the second edition of Bishop Lightfoot's "*Apostolic Fathers*."

quotes as the sayings of Jesus words which we feel certain He never could have uttered. There were eminent homilists in the third century, but it is doubtful if Origen, with all his learning, was a great preacher, albeit he left 200 homilies behind him ; and though we cannot doubt but Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian of Carthage were as eloquent in the pulpit as out of it, no proper specimens of their pulpit oratory have come down to our day. The fourth and fifth centuries were the age of the great homilists. The art then reached its highest perfection in the ancient Church ; it was, in some respects, the product of a slow growth, but it was then stimulated into unusual luxuriance by its temporary surroundings. Pulpit eloquence was then exerting an enormous influence not only on the Church, but on the Court and the outside world ; it was having at once its proudest triumphs and its most splendid rewards. Among the Greek preachers John of the Golden Mouth undoubtedly stands first ; Basil is generally placed second ; and after him come the Gregories—Nazianzen and Nyssen. Among the Latins, Augustine and Ambrose are much the most famous. The homilies which they and others have left behind them, and which have been preserved with such pious care, are so numerous that they would form a library by themselves.

Notwithstanding an obscure passage in Sozomen, in which it is said that “in the city of Rome the

people were not taught by the bishop, nor by any one in the Church,"<sup>1</sup> we may regard it as a certain fact that homiletic preaching was universal in the early Church both in the East and the West. The bishop preached in the cathedral church, the presbyter in the suburban church. The Councils of Laodiceæ, of Valentia, and of Constantinople in *Trullo* all speak of preaching as an essential part of the episcopal work; and in both the Theodosian and Justinian Codes it is declared sacrilege to neglect it. The Church was still an educational institute: the clergy were the teachers of the people.

The learned Bingham discriminates four different types of homily:—(1) Expositions of the sacred

<sup>1</sup> "In this city (Rome) the people are not taught by the bishop, nor by any one in the Church. At Alexandria the bishop alone teaches the people, and it is said that this custom has prevailed there ever since the days of Arius, who, though but a presbyter, broached a new doctrine." Book vii. chap. xix. Sozomen is here speaking of ecclesiastical peculiarities. "Different customs," says he, "prevail in many churches where the same doctrines are received." Here there seems to be a contrast between Rome and Alexandria. In Rome the bishop did not teach; in Alexandria the bishop only taught. In Alexandria the presbyters were prohibited from preaching since the days of Arius; in Rome, it may be inferred, the presbyters were the only teachers, and they did not teach in the church. These were the distinctive peculiarities of the two cities. Cassiodorus, who was himself a Senator and Consul and *Præfectus Prætorio* at Rome, quotes the passage in his "*Historia Tripartita*," and adds—"That no one can produce any sermon preached to the people of Rome before Leo"—that is, before A.D. 440, or thereby. This is rather perplexing; but it must either mean that the homiletic art had not yet been developed at Rome, and that instruction was there carried on in a more humble way, or that Rome had not yet produced any great preacher whose homilies could be placed beside those of the Eastern fathers.



books ; (2) Panegyrical discourses upon the saints and martyrs ; (3) Sermons on special occasions and festivals, as on the Nativity, the Epiphany, Lent, Easter, etc. ; (4) Sermons on doctrinal or moral subjects.<sup>1</sup> The division is a judicious one, and examples of each kind may be found in Chrysostom or Ambrose or Augustine. The greater number of the homilies of these celebrated men were carefully prepared before they were preached, but *extemporary* preaching was not altogether unknown (how could it ?), and in some cases shorthand writers, then as now, caught up the words of the preacher and gave them permanence.<sup>2</sup> In certain circumstances the published homilies of eminent fathers might be used by others, just as the "Book of Homilies" in the Church of England was meant to be used by unpractised preachers. Thus, in the Church of the fifth century, there had grown up almost all the pulpit usages which have again grown up in our own country and time under the pressure of similar circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

But there were some peculiar developments connected with the preaching of the Patristic Church which it is right I should explain. The preacher usually sat, after the manner of the rulers of the synagogue and of Jesus Himself, while the people stood and listened. We have a vestige of this in the open floors of cathedral churches. The sermon was generally prefaced by a *Pax Vobis*, and sometimes by

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, book xiv. chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



a short prayer for spiritual illumination. It always concluded with a doxology. Sometimes the bishop or presbyter preached without any text, but usually he fixed upon some passage from the psalm or the gospel or epistle for the day, a practice which continues in the Church of England to the present time. The sermons were of all lengths—some would not occupy ten minutes in the delivery, some must have occupied nearly an hour. Two hours was the time usually assigned to the whole service, so that in this respect there is a curious resemblance between the ancient and the modern Church. In all this we see how the free discussions of the Pauline Churches and the conversational style of the first homilies had given way to a stiffer and more methodised service.<sup>1</sup>

The most remarkable usage still remains. The people were accustomed to applaud the preacher by clapping their hands, by stamping their feet, by waving their handkerchiefs, by shouting "Orthodox! orthodox!" or, if any reference had been made to a heretic, by muttering "Anathema! anathema!" Sometimes, when individuals were deeply affected they gave vent to sobbing and groans, while others moved their bodies to and fro, "like the waves of the sea moved by the wind." These penitential demonstrations, as we all know, have not wholly died out. They are repeated at this day in the meetings of the Methodists, at the gatherings of revival preachers,

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, book xiv. chap. iv.

and in many Highland congregations. How like is human nature in all ages! It is curious that the very same motion—the swinging of the body to and fro, like a wave of the sea—should sometimes be seen still when Highland women are agitated by the preaching of some favourite minister. Such men as Chrysostom and Augustine ingenuously confess that they did not dislike the applause they received, though they protest they would rather be answered by groans and tears.<sup>1</sup> Others, who were not so confident of their pulpit power, hired persons to applaud them, as *claquers* are now paid to lead the applause in the theatre; and Paul of Antioch did not hesitate to censure his congregation if they did not applaud him enough.<sup>2</sup>

After the sixth century preaching began to decline. Sacramentalism was choking it out. The darkness of the Dark Ages was coming on. Before the eighth century bishops had almost ceased to preach; even parish priests preached seldom. On the outskirts of Christendom zealous missionaries were still preaching and driving back paganism; and in the thirteenth century the Dominicans, or preaching friars, were instituted; it was the first ray of

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, book xiv. chap. iv.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, “Eccles. Hist.,” vii. 30.—“Reproving and insulting those that did not applaud nor clap as in the theatres, nor exclaim and leap about at these things with his partisans, the men and women around him who were the indecent listeners to these things; but I say reproving those that were modestly and orderly hearing as in the house of God.”

returning light ; and it must have been a great day in the parish church when the black-gowned Dominican took his place in the pulpit and harangued the people on the virtues of indulgences and the merits of the saints. So things continued till the Reformation, when preaching a second time revolutionised the world.

2. THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL AND CATECHUMENISM.—When we now speak of a catechism, we understand a book in which instruction is given by way of question and answer. To catechise is to question. But that is not the original meaning of the words, nor is it the meaning they bore in early Christian literature. Catechetical instruction is simply elementary instruction ; and a catechumen was one who was receiving such instruction in order to being received into the Church by baptism. It is more than probable, however, that this instruction was frequently given by question and answer, and that thence came the modern meaning of the words.

The whole system connected with catechumenism arose from the circumstances in which the Patristic Church was placed, and is accordingly peculiar to the Patristic period. The Church was then making its most brilliant conquests over the surrounding heathenism. It was acquiring converts in every quarter. But the majority of these converts were profoundly ignorant of the system of religious truth which they had embraced. Some of them had, per-

haps, determined to join the Christians in a moment of enthusiasm, to which they had been stirred by the appeal of some impassioned preacher ; some had been won by the pure lives of the brethren ; some had been touched by the heroic endurance of the martyrs ; some had been allured by the half-sensuous expectations of Chiliasm, or the more spiritual hope of heaven. Many of them could know nothing or next to nothing of the speculations of St. Paul, or of the still more mystical theology which was at that very time being developed. You remember those Ephesian converts who, when they were questioned regarding the Holy Ghost, replied with surprising ingenuousness and even *naïveté* that they did not so much as know whether there was a Holy Ghost. Shall we believe that proselytes gathered out of the temples of Rome, and Corinth, and Athens knew more of the Christian theology, even though they were willing to assume the Christian name, and were probably to some extent affected by the Christian spirit ?

But there were other circumstances which increased the number of the catechumens. Many then regarded baptism with the same superstitious awe with which some people now regard the Last Supper, and refused to be washed in its waters. This feeling was increased by the belief, already prevalent in the second century, that baptism was tantamount to regeneration—that in its sacred bath all sin was washed away, and that

the baptized one emerged from the wonder-working waters a new creature. From this it was inferred by many pious souls that it would be well to defer baptism till death was near, that so they might go fresh from the purifying laver to the paradise of God. This belief kept back thousands from the font, and it is known to all the world that the great Constantine obstinately put off his baptism till he was near his death, and that even when he was dictating to the Council of Nicæa, and fixing the faith of the world, he occupied in the Church only the humble position of a catechumen.

Let us see, then, what was the place of the catechumen, and what were the methods employed for his instruction. All persons within the Church, who were still unbaptized, were ranked as catechumens. In this class were embraced all the converts from heathenism who had not yet received the holy rite, and all those members of Christian families who had not been baptized in their infancy—for infant baptism was by no means universal in the third century, and in the second century it was certainly rare, probably unknown.<sup>1</sup> These were sometimes called “Novitii,” sometimes “Tyrones Dei,” and they may be said to correspond, in some respects, to those who in our own day are adherents of the Church but not communicating members.

They were regarded as occupying the lowest grade

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, “De Baptismo,” cap. xviii.

in the gospel kingdom—better than heathens—better than heretics—but by no means perfect Christians. And the Church in those days delighted to make patent to all the world the difference between the perfect and the imperfect Christian character. But even among the catechumens there were at least two grades—the *audientes* and *competentes*.<sup>1</sup> The former were admitted to the churches—for the church-doors were open to all, even to the heathens—but it was only to listen to the Scripture lessons and the sermons: it was not permitted to them to join in the prayers, much less to behold the holy mysteries connected with the Sacraments. Before these were begun, they were commanded to withdraw like the profane and the unclean—“*Nequis audientium.*”<sup>2</sup> The “competentes” or “genuflectentes” (*γονυκλίνοντες*)—kneelers, as they were sometimes called—were so named because they were now so far advanced in their catechism that they were candidates for baptism, and were allowed to remain to the first prayer after the sermon, which was known as the Catechumens’ Prayer, lowly bending on their knees and waiting for the minister’s benediction.<sup>3</sup> Truly a stern discipline this, which could hardly be revived in modern times! Truly a high endeavour

<sup>1</sup> Hearers and candidates.

<sup>2</sup> “Apostolical Constitutions,” book viii. chaps. vi.-xii. “Let none of the catechumens, let none of the hearers, let none of the unbelievers, let none of the heterodox, stay here.”

<sup>3</sup> “Apostolical Constitutions,” book viii.; Bunsen’s “Hippolytus;” vol. iii.; Bingham, book x. chap. ii.



to shroud the services of the Church in mists and mystery!

We often read of the catechists of the early Church, by which is meant those who undertook the instruction of the catechumens, but these did not form a distinct order in the Church. Bishop or presbyter or deacon might for the time do the duty of the catechist; or even a reader who had not received orders at all. St. Ambrose tells us how, on a Palm Sunday, he took the "competentes" into the baptistery of the church and there rehearsed the Creed to them, so as to prepare them for baptism on Easter eve.<sup>1</sup> St. Chrysostom, we know, did this work when he was a presbyter at Antioch, and we have a large number of his catechetical discourses still remaining. But the greatest of all the catechists was Origen, who, by his learned labours, has shed undying lustre on the catechetical school of Alexandria. When he began his work at the age of eighteen he was not even a deacon.<sup>2</sup> It seems to have been in the early Church, as it is among ourselves at this day. Any one possessed of sufficient learning, whether ordained or not, might act as a teacher of the young,<sup>3</sup> or, as it was sometimes styled, a "Doctor audientium."

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, book iii. chap. x.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, book vi. chap. iii.

<sup>3</sup> "Apostolical Constitutions," book viii. chap. xxxii.—"Let him that teaches, though he be one of the laity, yet if he be skilful in the Word and grave in his manners, teach; for 'they shall all be taught of God.'"



There can be little doubt but that every Church had its own school, however humble—it might be the presbyter's house—in which its catechumens were prepared for admission to the mysteries. But we know specially that famous catechetical schools existed at Rome, at Cæsarea, at Antioch, and in other great cities. But of all the Christian schools of antiquity that of Alexandria was undoubtedly the most famous. It was said to have been founded by St. Mark; the distinguished neo-Platonist Pantænus taught in it; Clement was one of its masters; Origen raised it to its highest celebrity; and Arius gave it the dubious lustre of his great but heretical reputation. Thus, some of the highest names of the first four centuries were associated with it. The light of literature shone upon the commercial city of Alexandria when the sun of Athens had for ever gone down, and there came from its catechetical school a race of scholars and thinkers who indeed mixed up the speculations of an eclectic philosophy with the simple religion of Jesus, and, despising the letter of Scripture, thought they discovered its hidden meaning in fine-spun allegories; but who, from this very circumstance, were able to meet the Gnostics and neo-Platonic revivers of paganism on their own ground, and by means of a mild heresy annihilate a more deadly one.

There can be no doubt but these schools were suggested by the schools for grammar, geometry, and philosophy which existed in every town, and in which

the most eminent rhetoricians and sophists delighted to teach. When a man in our day wishes to propagate an opinion he publishes a book; in those days he opened a school. How free and easy was the system of instruction pursued in these schools we all know. In the gardens of the Academy, under the shade of the Porch, the ancient masters had strolled with their disciples; and in open conversation and bold discussion, the one had learned from the other. It was so still in many places. In opulent Alexandria, which patronised the literature which gave it throughout the world a greater reputation than all its riches, there were the magnificent buildings of the Museum and the Serapeum—the haunts and the homes of the pagan philosophy. The catechetical school had no collegiate buildings—no gardens, no porticoes—the scholars of Origen, male and female, came to him at his own house, which was probably a very poor dwelling, as his father's property had been confiscated, and he himself delighted to live an ascetic life.<sup>1</sup>

The school of Alexandria aimed at something higher than the humble seminaries of the rural churches. It was the first Divinity Hall of the Christian Church; for the fame of Origen drew many to his lectures who were ambitious of entering the Church as its rulers and teachers, and as a matter of fact, several eminent bishops and presbyters, not to speak of martyrs, came from this school. It

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, book vi. chaps. iii.-viii.

would seem that the method of teaching generally employed in these schools was chiefly by way of homilies or discourses, but in the provincial schools these were confined to the more elementary principles of Christianity. A great number of such discourses by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Gregory, St. Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, and others, have come down to us. In these we find almost every subject discussed—repentance, faith, good works, the remission of sins, the renunciation of the devil, the utility of baptism, the immortality of the soul. In the “Apostolical Constitutions” we have a course of instruction prescribed of a much more recondite nature, and certainly enough to exercise the intellect of the most advanced Christian—as, for instance, the knowledge of the unbegotten Father and of his only begotten Son, the divine order of the world’s creation and providence, the place of man in the universe, and God’s special providences toward him. When the catechumen had fully digested these things the hands of his instructor were to be laid upon him, and thanks given to God for his progress; and then he was to be taught regarding the incarnation, the passion, the resurrection, and ascension of Christ. And, last of all, he was to be informed how he must renounce the devil and give in his allegiance to Jesus.<sup>1</sup> An extensive curriculum no doubt, and one should say that if a catechumen had fully mastered

<sup>1</sup> “Apostolical Constitutions,” book vii. chap. xxxix.

all these subjects, he was no longer a babe in Christ, and had advanced from the milk to the solid meat.

It would seem that a course of reading was recommended, if not prescribed, to the catechumens in certain portions of the canonical and apocryphal writings. In some cases at least a preference was given to the apocryphal books, as being by their moral and historical contents best suited for the uninitiated.<sup>1</sup> And, indeed, in these books there are examples of heroic devotion and endurance which were well fitted to fire the enthusiasm of the young Christian, and to prepare him to do all, dare all, and suffer all when the dark days of persecution came. Of course the Decalogue was read and taught, and such teaching was sometimes called the doctrine of the two ways—the way of life and the way of death.<sup>2</sup>

Some of this instruction, as I have already said, was given publicly by catechetical discourses in the Church, but it is probable the greater part of it was given in private in the catechetical school; and we

<sup>1</sup> "Upon this account," Athanasius says, "though they were not canonical books, as the rest of the books of the Old and New Testament, yet they were such as were appointed to be read by those who were new proselytes, and desirous to be instructed in the ways of godliness." ("Ep. Heortastic," tom. ii. p. 39.)

<sup>2</sup> "The lawgiver Moses said to the Israelites, 'Behold I have set before your face the way of life and the way of death.'" (Deut. xxx. 15.) "Apostolical Constitutions," book vii. chap. i. See also Bunsen's "Hippolytus."

may be certain it was often given conversationally and by way of question and answer, thus originating the Catechism as we now understand it.

Of course all this must have occupied time, and three years seem to have been the canonical period; but it might be varied according to the proficiency and good intentions of the candidate:<sup>1</sup> so did the "Apostolical Constitutions" ordain. The Council of Eliberis, however, thought two years sufficient; the Council of Agde reduced the period to eight months for Jewish converts; and there are passages in both Cyril and Jerome which seem to indicate that forty days were enough. It is clear there was no immutable rule.

In all this elaborate preparation there was a departure from apostolic custom. On the very Pentecostal day on which Peter converted the thousands at Jerusalem, they were hurried to the nearest pool and dipped in its waters, without examination and without instruction. Philip thought that a short explanation of a chapter of Isaiah was enough to qualify the Ethiopian for reception into the Church, and he bathed him in the first stream they came to. Paul baptized the jailor of Philippi and his whole household on the same night in which they were frightened out of their

<sup>1</sup> "Let him who is to be a catechumen be a catechumen for three years; but if any be diligent and has a good will to his business let him be admitted; for it is not the length of time, but the course of life that is judged." ("Apostolical Constitutions," book viii. chap. xxxii.)

heathenism by the earthquake. But there was good reason for departing from this precipitate initiation, if the Church was not to be filled with men and women ignorant of its doctrines, not yet broken in to its ways, perhaps connected with some idolatrous trade, or implicated in some infamous practice, or fresh from some abominable mode of life.<sup>1</sup>

I have spoken of the Church services to which the catechumens were admitted "*missa catechumenorum*," and of the others from which they were debarred "*missa fidelium*." I have also spoken of the lessons they received; but there were others of which no word was allowed to be spoken. Conspicuous among these secret doctrines was the mysterious teaching of the Church in regard to baptism and the eucharist, and the catechumens were kept in as profound ignorance of these as the outside world is now in regard to the mysteries of masonry. Is it possible the Christian Church had its outer and its inner doctrine? Is it possible it had one way of presenting its truths to the initiated few, and a totally different way of exhibiting them to the uninitiated many?

It is well known that the philosophic schools of antiquity had an esoteric and exoteric doctrine. By this is meant not merely that they graduated their

<sup>1</sup> The carefulness of the Church in this matter is most praiseworthy. See "*Apostolical Constitutions*," viii. 32.



teaching to the capacity of the learners, but that there were certain tenets, and above all certain meanings of tenets, which were kept among the initiated, and never communicated to the outside world. This system was known in the schools of the Jewish Rabbis as well as of the Greek sophists, though it seems to have been imported from Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> The Christian schools to some extent followed the same system.

The Great Teacher, it is said, gave the first hint of the method. "Why speakest thou to them in parables?" said the disciples on one occasion to their Master. "And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables." And He added the somewhat startling reason—"That seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand:"<sup>2</sup> as if the parable method were employed, if not to conceal, at least to obscure his meaning. St. Paul is also thought by some to have taught that mystery was proper in religion. "Howbeit," says he, "we speak wisdom among the perfect. . . . We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden."<sup>3</sup> It was only among the perfect, among the initiated, that he spoke the mysterious, hidden wisdom of God.

<sup>1</sup> Hausrath's "New Testament Times," vol. i. p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Mark iv. 10-12 ; Matt. xiii. 10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 7.

When we descend to the literature immediately succeeding the apostolic age, we have clear indications that there was already an esoteric and exoteric method of teaching in the Church.

In the curious Epistle of Peter to James, introductory to the Clementine Homilies, the one Apostle begs and beseeches the other not to communicate his homiletical books to any but the initiated.<sup>1</sup> Before any one could see the books he must undergo a trial of six years, and then standing by a stream or pool of living water, take a solemn oath that he would never communicate the contents of the books to any but those who were initiated like himself. From this one should imagine the Clementines contained the most tremendous mysteries, but they are now open to all, and are found to be nothing but a wearisome fiction, the only value of which is the view which it gives of the religious conceptions of the period. In correspondence with this, at the close of the "Apostolic Constitutions," the writer dedicates the eight books to the bishops of the Church, as "they were not fit to be published before all, because of the mysteries contained in them." The "Constitutions" are no doubt a technical or professional book, giving directions as to the Church's offices and officials, but there does not appear to us to be any very

<sup>1</sup> Supposed to belong to the second or beginning of the third century. I am inclined to place them in the middle of the third century. Baur and other Tübingen scholars place great stress upon this work.

strong reason why these should be regarded as secrets.<sup>1</sup>

Clement of Alexandria, in his "Stromata," or Miscellanies, argues at great length that there must be and ought to be an esoteric and exoteric doctrine. He proves by a large induction of facts that so it has been in all religions and in all schools of thought. "It is requisite, therefore," he says, "to hide in a mystery the wisdom which the Son of God taught." "I fear," he exclaims, "to cast the pearls before swine, lest they tread them under foot and turn and rend us. For it is difficult to exhibit the really pure and transparent words respecting the true light to swinish and untrained hearers."<sup>2</sup> He declares that "the uninitiated at the mysteries, like the unmusical at dances, not being yet pure and worthy of the pure truth, but still discordant and disordered and material, must stand outside of the divine choir."<sup>3</sup> He relates that Hipparchus, the Pythagorean, being guilty of writing the tenets of Pythagoras in plain language, was expelled from the school, and a pillar raised for

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, who lived toward the end of the second and the beginning of the third century (synchronous with the supposed date of the "Constitutions"), denies with vehemence that there was any secret doctrine. "Supposing," says he, "that among intimate friends, so to speak, they did hold certain discussions, yet it is incredible that these could have been such as should bring in some other rule of faith, differing from and contrary to that which they were proclaiming through the Catholic Churches,—as if they spoke of one God in the Church and another at home, and described one substance of Christ publicly and another secretly," etc. etc.—"De Præscript. Hæret.," chap. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> "Stromata," i. 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* v. 4.

him as if he were dead, and he greatly approves of this rigour ; for, says he, “ the mysteries of the word are not to be expounded to the profane.”<sup>1</sup> And he completes his argument by quoting the “ holy Apostle Paul,” who “ preserved the prophetic and truly ancient secret,” and who said to the Corinthians, “ And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to carnal.”<sup>2</sup>

In like manner, Origen, in his “ Treatise against Celsus,” though he does not glory in the secret teaching of the Church, as Clement does, fully admits it. Celsus had reproached Christianity with being a secret system. “ To speak of the Christian doctrine,” says he, “ as a secret system is altogether absurd. But that there should be certain doctrines, not made known to the multitude, which are (revealed) after the exoteric ones have been taught, is not a peculiarity of Christianity alone, but also of philosophic systems, in which certain truths are exoteric and others esoteric.”<sup>3</sup>

We may, therefore, regard it as a matter of perfect certainty that the early Church had an inner and outer doctrine ; that it taught its catechumens only so much of the truth, and reserved the remainder for those who were illuminated by baptism. The question arises, what was the truth which was thus withheld ? What were the mysteries which were thus so carefully

<sup>1</sup> “ Stromata,” v. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* v. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Origen, “ Contra Celsum,” book i. chap. vii.

guarded? They amounted to little more than the symbolical meaning of the sacraments, and the mode in which they were administered. The sacraments were pre-eminently the mysteries, and were always spoken of as such.

It has, indeed, been affirmed that the Patristic Church secretly taught doctrines which have now been happily forgotten, or which have come down to us in the traditional teaching of the Roman Church. There can be no doubt it was its clandestine meetings and hidden teaching which aroused the suspicions of the heathen magistrates. But we know the causes which led to midnight meetings; we know the crimes which were imputed to the Christians; we know the equivocal language about eating flesh and drinking blood which probably led to the horrid imputations; but no person is now so ill-informed as to believe them. All this, however, shows the danger of mystery; and that there was mystery in the early Church is undeniable.

The barrier set up between the service of the catechumens and that of the baptized was the veil that concealed the mystery. So soon as the first part of the service was over, proclamation was made that the uninitiated must withdraw. Baron Bunsen, indeed, contends that this, more especially in the time of Hippolytus, amounted to no more than the withdrawal, in any of our own churches, of those who do not wish to join in the communion service. But it

did amount to much more, for it was not a matter of voluntary but enforced withdrawal, and when all but the faithful were gone, the doors were locked and guarded by the deacons.<sup>1</sup> No heathen, no heretic, no catechumen might, with unconsecrated eyes, gaze upon the sacred symbols of our Lord's Passion, or hear any one of the Eucharistic prayers. There was no exception even in the case of the highest, and thus when the Emperor Constantius, who was still only a catechumen, following the funeral of his august father, came to the church door, he was obliged to stop there with his heathen guards while the procession of bishops and presbyters, and deacons and abbots, and anchorites and faithful passed in. If, through any accident, a novice had seen that which it was not lawful for him to see, the only remedy was to have him baptized, lest he should betray the awful sight.<sup>2</sup> Both Epiphanius and St. Jerome accuse the heretical Marcionites of admitting catechumens to their mysteries, as if this were a mortal sin. St. Athanasius goes so far as to argue that if catechumens were present in the church there could be no oblation.

It was so with the other sacred rites, and more especially with baptism. Every precaution was taken to keep the uninitiated ignorant as to what was to happen when they were introduced to the baptismal bath.

<sup>1</sup> "Let the door be watched, lest any unbeliever or one not yet initiated come in." ("Apost. Const.," book ii. chap. lvii.)

<sup>2</sup> "Apost. Const.," book vii. chap. xxv.



The entire teaching of the Church for more than three hundred years was in harmony with this sacramental exclusiveness. Ambrose tells us that his discourses to the catechumens were upon morality only, but that, when they were initiated, he explained to them the mysteries. Augustine, having seen the catechumens dismissed, remarked to the neophytes who remained, "We are now to discourse more particularly of the heavenly mysteries or sacraments, which none are qualified to hear but such as by God's gift are made partakers of them." Theodoret, in explaining his method, says, "We discourse obscurely of divine mysteries before the unbaptized, but when they are gone, we speak plainly to the baptized." And Cyril, in addressing his congregation, exclaims, "You were once catechumens, and then we did not discourse of mysteries to you : and now that you have attained by experience to the height of those things which we teach, you will perceive that catechumens are not worthy to be hearers of them."<sup>1</sup>

The preachers of those days frequently felt themselves seriously hampered by this limitation of their subject, and sometimes when the whole truth was trembling on their lips they were obliged to repress it. "I would speak plainly," cried John of the Golden Mouth, "but I dare not because of the unbaptized ; for they make our expositions more difficult, compelling us to speak obscurely, or else we must let out

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, book x. chap. v.

what they have no business to hear." "The initiated know this," is a phrase which Casaubon has counted up as occurring no fewer than fifty times in the writings of that Father, when he found himself on the verge of a mystery. More curious still is the manner in which Epiphanius refers to the institution of the Last Supper, half concealing, half revealing, "*Hoc meum est hoc et hoc*"—"This is my this and that:" anything more explicit would have revealed the mysterious words of institution—"Hoc est meum corpus."<sup>1</sup>

When infant baptism became common, and there were no longer any home pagans to instruct, catechetical schools gradually disappeared. But the institution exists still in another shape, and must exist always. Even during the dark ages the parish priest was bound to instruct all the children of his cure in the *Pater Noster*, the *Ave Maria*, the *Credo*, and the *Ten Commandments*. When the Homily in like manner declined, and in some places almost entirely disappeared, and when, indeed, the barbarous people

<sup>1</sup> From this it followed that the Creed, as a whole, must be concealed from the public—even the Christian public. "I formerly deemed it necessary," says Sozomen, "to transcribe the Confession (or symbol, *σύμβολον*) of Faith drawn up by the unanimous consent of this council, in order that posterity might possess a public record of the truth; but subsequently I was persuaded to the contrary by some godly and learned friends, who represented that such matters ought to be kept secret, as being only requisite to be known by disciples and their instructors, and it is probable that this volume will fall into the hands of the unlearned." ("Hist.," book i. chap. xx.)

were scarcely able to understand any discussion of divine truth, the ecclesiastics endeavoured to supply this want of preaching by having pictures in the churches representing sacred subjects, as pictures are now hung up on the walls of an infant school. From these the people formed their ideas of the chief incidents of the Old and New Testaments. The priests supplemented this kind of instruction by miracle and passion plays. Occasionally a preaching friar appeared in the parish church, and harangued the wondering parishioners on the horrors of purgatory, the power of indulgences, and the miracles of the saints. Thus the Church never altogether abdicated its function as a teacher.

When the Reformation dawned, teaching, both in the Church and the school, revived. The people, when the first rays of light broke upon them, cried for preachers and teachers, and having got them, "the truth made them free." It was the great ambition of the Scotch Reformers to add a school to every church.

Thus, then, it was the teaching of the early Church which was the lever that moved the world. A new mode of worship would never have done it: a new truth carefully kept among the initiated would never have achieved it; but higher views of human duty and human destiny than had ever yet been promulgated; nobler conceptions of the divine than the world had ever yet heard,—these,

faithfully taught, boldly preached, were enough to shake society to its basis, and introduce a new religion.

It was by teaching, and especially by preaching, that Christianity obtained its first triumphs, and it is by the same agency it has managed to preserve its influence during the long centuries. It has risen or fallen according to the power existing in its pulpits. When preaching was at its best, Christianity rose to its climax; when preaching became feeble Christianity declined. During the three first centuries every enthusiast was a preacher, and converts were made in millions: during the middle ages the pulpit was silent, unless when a wandering friar occupied it, and religion fell into a dead sleep: at the time of the Reformation Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox thundered against the mass-mumbling priests, and by their mere words set all Europe in a blaze. The truth is, it is only by the force of intellect and the persuasive power of the living voice that man can move his brother-man. No great revolution in religion, or anything else, can be wrought except by this agency. No pageant, no magic, no miracle will do it.

This is fully recognised now, and it is certain that in the Church of the future it will be recognised still more. At this moment a great development is going on in the Church's teaching. Recognising that the Christian people of the nineteenth century are already

well instructed in the elements of the faith, the best preachers of the Church are endeavouring to lead them up to higher truths, teaching them to see God and goodness in history, in science, in everything. Concurring with those philosophers who include physics and history under theology, as creation and providence are simply a development of God—the infinite revealed in the finite—they teach these things, in this sense, to the people. The Church is thus becoming more and more a lecture-room; not merely echoing, for the thousandth time, the old truths, but proclaiming new ones. And what a glorious opportunity the clergy have of communicating divine knowledge to a people hungering and thirsting after it! On six days they must labour and do all their work, but on the Sunday they go up in millions to the Churches of Christendom, too often to be sent empty away, or to receive a stone in place of bread. Hence the complaint that sermons are a weariness. Hence the ominous decline in church-going. But some of the prophets of the day, with a clearer vision of the Church's duty and destiny than their brethren, are striving to develop the power of the pulpit by identifying science and history with religion, maintaining that all knowledge is good, that there is but a thin partition between the secular and sacred, and that whatever promotes man's health and happiness and comfort promotes God's glory. Thus a new style of teaching is being evolved, and a new era of useful-

ness is opening up for the Church. Not by insisting on exploded dogmas, but by proclaiming new and everlasting truths, the Churches are flourishing and will flourish.



## LECTURE IV.

### THE SACRAMENTS : BAPTISM.

IN the Roman Church there are seven religious usages called sacraments ; in the Protestant Churches two ; in the New Testament not one. But Baptism and the Lord's Supper stand out so markedly from all other Christian institutions that they are justly entitled to the honourable appellation of sacraments. In both there is symbolism—an outward act symbolising an inward feeling. The one is the initiatory ceremony by which man or woman is received into the Christian society ; the other is the social meal by which the members of the Christian society maintain their feelings of fellowship, and at the same time perpetuate the memory of their Founder. The former was instituted when Jesus bade his Apostles to go out on their mission and make disciples of men of all nations, baptizing (or bathing) them in token of their discipleship ; the latter was instituted when Jesus, now face to face with death, asked his friends to meet together,

after he was gone, as often as they could, and eat together a friendly supper in remembrance of Him. Beyond all question both have continued from the day of their institution down to this day, forming an unbroken chain between the Christianity of the nineteenth century and that of the first. In many respects both have so changed their aspect as to be scarcely recognisable, but of their continuity and even identity there can be no doubt.

We shall first follow the historical developments of baptism.

In warm climates man takes to the water almost as readily as a duck. All tribes who live by seaside or river-side indulge in bathing. Comfort, cleanliness, healthfulness, compel it. And to the imaginative mind a bath has its obvious analogies. The traveller, hot and dusty from the desert, plunges into the stream, and he emerges fresh and clean. In doing so he cannot help thinking of his mental defilements, and of how they may be washed away. So it has come to pass that among many nations bathing has been a religious ordinance.<sup>1</sup> It was seen that

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian thus refers to some of these customs: "Washing is the channel through which they (the heathen) are initiated into some sacred rites, as of the notorious Isis or Mithras. The gods themselves, they likewise honour by washings. Moreover, by carrying water round and sprinkling it, they everywhere purify country seats, houses, temples, and whole cities. At all events, at the Apollinarian and Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration and the remission of the

whatever promotes health, vigour, and purity is religious; that bodily health and purity symbolise mental health and purity; and it was also seen, though more dimly, that bodily health and purity actually create mental health and purity. Thus not only for its analogies, but for its own effects, bathing became a religious institution.

The Mosaic legislation, which, to some extent, was founded on sanitary considerations, made bathing and careful ablution imperative in a great many constantly-recurring cases,<sup>1</sup> and there can be no doubt but that the cleanliness and health of the chosen people were promoted in this way. The necessity of moral cleansing was also pressed home upon them. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings,"<sup>2</sup> would be constantly sounding in their ears. The only danger was that they should come to fancy, as many of them did, that the mere outward ablution was of itself enough.

There were cases of another kind in which the Jews used bathing. When a Gentile became a proselyte he was bathed before his reception into the

penalties due to their perjuries. ("De Baptismo," chap. v.) Any number of examples of this custom could be given. Thus, the Egyptian priests washed four times a day: the Brahmins still wash in the sacred Ganges. In Rome there was a general lustration every five years. At the door of heathen temples, as now of Catholic churches, there was a vessel with holy water and a priest with a brush to sprinkle the passers in.

<sup>1</sup> See numerous references in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah i. 16.

community.<sup>1</sup> In his immersion there was, at least, a symbol of his old heathenism being washed away ; and as people come quickly to confound the thing symbolised with the symbol, it was thought by many that his old character and faith were actually purged out of him in the water.

The sect of the Essenes were especially devoted to bathing. Once or twice a day they plunged into some pool or stream. They were especially careful to bathe before their noonday meal, for it was a communistic meal with a religious meaning, and they must not eat of it with any dirt on soul or body. They thought bathing better than sacrifice. They were the purest-minded of the Jewish sects, though somewhat inclined to asceticism.<sup>2</sup>

John the Baptist had some of the characteristics of the Essene. His coarse clothing, his plain fare, his antagonism to the sins of his day, his employment of bathing, were all Essenic. Moreover, the wilderness of the Jordan, where he appeared, was the very region where most of the Essene communities were to be found, living in the ravines and

<sup>1</sup> Prideaux, "The Old and New Testament Connected," part. ii. book v.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus lived among the Essenes for three years, and gives us some interesting glimpses of them ; and more especially of a hermit called Banus, who lived in the same district, about twenty years after John, was clothed with the bark of trees, subsisted on wild fruits, had a great reputation for piety, and was in many respects like the Baptist. "Josephi Vita," ii. See also Stanley's "Jewish Church," Lect. 1., for a most interesting description of the Essenes.

limestone caves, and having all things in common.<sup>1</sup> He preached repentance, and then plunged his penitents under the waters of the Jordan in token of their sins being washed away. A strange and impressive spectacle it must have been when the crowds of sinful men and women who had come to this religious revival, touched by the impassioned preaching of the prophet, and many of them deeply agitated, submitted to the penitential bath. And most impressive of all, when the young Galilean, the kinsman of John, who had done no sin, came forward and claimed also to be baptized. We need not wonder that down to this day a great cavalcade of Christian pilgrims annually resort to the same sacred river in the firm belief that having bathed in its waters their heavenly salvation is secure.<sup>2</sup>

When Jesus therefore enjoined His Apostles to use bathing as the ceremonial entrance into His community, He enjoined no new custom, but a custom well known and perfectly understood.

The injunction of Jesus was to make disciples of men of all tribes, and having done so to baptize them. The Apostles acted up to their commission, and

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding these resemblances there is no reason to believe that John was an Essene, initiated into their mysteries and living their life. But without being one of them he may have been so far in sympathy with them.

<sup>2</sup> For a very graphic account of this pilgrim baptism, see Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," chap. vii. ; also his "Christian Institutions," chap. i.

accordingly there are frequent notices of baptism in the New Testament. On the first Pentecost Peter preached, and the burden of his preaching was—"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ;" and then it is added—"They that received his word were baptized."<sup>1</sup> Soon after this Philip the deacon went down to Samaria and "proclaimed unto them Christ." And, "when they believed Philip, preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women."<sup>2</sup> If we follow Paul to Corinth, that motley city of mixed nationalities, where moral purity was scarcely understood, we find the same usage—"Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized."<sup>3</sup> It was the recognised initiation into the Christian society.

The imaginative Eastern mind now began to see in it new analogies. When a person is plunged under the water he is, for the moment, like one buried under the earth. This struck Paul, and, not content with the old and more beautiful analogy, he now uses this new one in his letters both to the Romans and Colossians. "Are ye ignorant," he says, "that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 38, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 5-12.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xviii. 8.



so we also might walk in newness of life.”<sup>1</sup> And so, in like style, to the Church of Colossæ. “Having been buried with him (Christ) in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”<sup>2</sup> Paul’s idea is, that as a buried person has parted with his old life, so every baptized person has parted with his former way of living; and that as Christ rose from His burial-place, so the Christian rises from the burial-bath a new creature. The analogy is a favourite one with many, but it is neither so obvious nor so striking as that founded on the purifying influence of water.

According to the commission which Jesus gave to His Apostles, as recorded in Matthew’s Gospel, they were to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But this solemn formula—now regarded as the distinguishing mark of Christian baptism, and as essential to its right administration—is never more referred to in the New Testament. There are references to baptism “in the name of Jesus Christ,”<sup>3</sup> “into the name of the Lord Jesus,”<sup>4</sup> “into Christ Jesus,”<sup>5</sup> “into Christ,”<sup>6</sup> but never into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These Scripture notices have led many, and among them so high an authority as Neander, to think that there was an older formula than that given by Matthew, accord-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 3, 4.<sup>2</sup> Col. ii. 12.<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 38.<sup>4</sup> Acts viii. 16; xix. 5.<sup>5</sup> Rom. vi. 3.<sup>6</sup> Gal. iii. 27.

ing to which converts were baptized into the name of Christ only.”<sup>1</sup> Nor is the notion a new one. Ambrose, looking to the passages I have quoted, held that baptism into the name of Christ was enough, but he argued it was enough only because the name of Christ included the whole Trinity.<sup>2</sup> Pope Nicholas I. was of the same mind. Cyprian and Basil halt between the two opinions.<sup>3</sup> But, whatever may have been the practice in the apostolic age, in the age immediately following the formula of Matthew was in universal use, unless among those stigmatised as heretics.<sup>4</sup> In both the “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles” and the “Apology of Justin” the full formula is given, and in the apostolic canons it is laid down as law that if any bishop or presbyter do not baptize into Father, Son, and Holy Spirit he is to be deposed.<sup>5</sup> To make the matter still more clear, every catechumen required to be dipped thrice as a symbol of the Trinity, but he was to be carefully guarded against supposing

<sup>1</sup> “Church History,” vol. i. p. 423. “History of the Planting,” etc., vol. i. p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> “De Spirit. Sanct.,” i. 3. “Qui benedicitur in Christo, benedicitur in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, quia unum nomen una potestas.”

<sup>3</sup> Cyprian, Epist. 72. To Jubaianus. Cyprian seems to think that baptism into the name of Christ alone was enough for a Jew, but that a Gentile must be baptized into the Trinity. See also Bingham, xi. 3, and Smith’s “Dictionary of Christian Antiquities,” vol. i. p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> Many of these heretical fancies will be found in Bingham as above quoted. Or the reader may go direct to Cyprian’s “Epistles,” Tertullian on “Baptism,” etc.

<sup>5</sup> Canon 49.

that each separate dip was in honour of a separate person.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the numerous references to baptism in the New Testament, there is not one passage in which the mode of its administration is described. But there is no uncertainty as to the matter. Baptism means immersion, and it was immersion. The Hebrews immersed their proselytes, the Essenes took their daily bath, John plunged his penitents into the Jordan, Peter dipped his crowd of converts into one of the great pools which were to be found in Jerusalem. Unless it had been so, Paul's analogical argument about our being buried with Christ in baptism would have had no meaning.

In the Christian literature of the second century we have descriptions of baptisms which show us their mode. "Now concerning baptism," says the author of the "Teaching of the Apostles," "thus baptize ye : having first uttered all these things, baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit in running water. But if thou hast not running water, baptize in other water ; and if thou canst not in cold, then in warm. But if thou hast neither, pour

<sup>1</sup> Canon 50. We find other writers strenuously holding that each distinct dip was into the name of a distinct Person. "It is not once only, but thrice," says Tertullian, "we are immersed into the Three Persons, at each several mention of their names." "Adversus Prox-eam," chap. xxvi. Others, going upon an entirely different track, held that the three dips were symbolical of the three days' burial.

water upon the head thrice.”<sup>1</sup> Equally interesting is the description of primitive baptism given by Justin Martyr—“As many as are persuaded that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to live accordingly . . . are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same way in which we were ourselves regenerated.”<sup>2</sup> In the “Clementine Homilies” there is reference to “washing in a flowing river or fountain, or even in the sea, with the thrice blessed invocation.”<sup>3</sup> Tertullian speaks of the great simplicity of the ordinance—“Without pomp,” says he, “without any considerable novelty of preparation, finally without expense a man is dipped in water, and amid the utterance of some few words is sprinkled, and then rises again, not much (or not at all) the cleaner.”<sup>4</sup> But without looking to such passages as these it may be regarded as certain that in the literature of the first twelve centuries to baptize is to bathe.

Nothing could have been simpler than baptism in its first form. When a convert declared his faith in Christ he was taken at once to the nearest pool or stream of water and plunged into it, and henceforward he was recognised as one of the Christian community. Very soon extraneous forms began to gather round the primitive ceremony, as lichens gather on a stone. By the second century the candidate for baptism

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. lxi.

<sup>3</sup> Hom. ix. chap. xix.

<sup>4</sup> “De Baptismo,” chap. ii. He says it was so simple (though ceremonial was already gathering round it) that it was almost incredible that eternity could be gained by it.

required to fast for one or two days preparatory to his initiation.<sup>1</sup> It was a Judaic custom which had drifted down into the Christian age. Now also began the system of catechumenism, of which I have already spoken. The catechumen required to undergo a course of study and gradual preparation, extending from forty days to two or three years, according to circumstances. He was weaned from his former wicked ways, he was instructed in the exoteric doctrines of Christianity, he was gradually admitted to more and more of the Church services, and taught to look forward to his baptism as his initiation into the great mystery of his faith. But everything connected with the ceremony was still carefully concealed from him. It would have been impiety for any of the initiated to betray it.

Occasionally there was a return to apostolic simplicity and celerity, as when a whole tribe, following its chief, was received into the Church. Thus, in the early part of the fifth century, the Burgundians resolved to embrace Christianity. "Going, therefore," says the historian Socrates, "to one of the Gallic cities, they requested the bishop to grant them baptism; who ordering them to fast seven days, and having meanwhile instructed them in the elementary principles of the faith, on the eighth day he baptized and dismissed them."<sup>2</sup> Still swifter than this, there

<sup>1</sup> "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," *ut supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, "Eccles. Hist.," book vii. chap. xxx.

were some, who, in the extremities of sickness and death, were converted and baptized in the same hour.

From the very beginning there was imbedded in the doctrine of baptism the germ-idea that baptism was regeneration; and this necessarily exercised a great influence in its development. The Jews believed that their proselytes were made new creatures by baptism. Jesus is thought by many to indicate the same belief in his conversation with Nicodemus. Paul argues that if we are buried with Christ in baptism, we rise with Him to newness of life. If all this is figure and metaphor the Patristic writers misunderstood it, and believed baptism to be tantamount to regeneration. Justin says the baptized were regenerated in the same way in which those who baptized them were.<sup>1</sup> "Blessed is the sacrament of our waters," says Tertullian, "in that by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life." "But we little fishes," he continues, "after the example of our ΙΧΘΥΣ Jesus Christ, are born in water."<sup>2</sup> A curious allusion, but easily explained. Some ingenious Christian had discovered that the letters which form the Greek word Ἰχθὺς, a fish, were the initial letters of Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτὴρ (Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour), and hence they called Him their Ἰχθὺς, or fish. In comparison with Him, Tertullian

<sup>1</sup> "Apology," chap. lxi.

<sup>2</sup> "De Baptismo," chap. i.



speaks of all baptized Christians as little fishes, and as born in water.<sup>1</sup> In allusion to this a fish was one of the most common symbols for a Christian in the early church. It is found in the catacombs, on antique Christian vessels, and on the doorways of churches.<sup>2</sup>

When we come down to the preachers of the fourth and fifth centuries we find them addressing to the candidates for baptism language of the most extravagant kind. "As a spark thrown into the ocean," exclaims Chrysostom, "is instantly extinguished, so is sin, be it what it may, extinguished, when the man is thrown into the basin of regeneration. Nay, he comes forth another man." "Although a man should be foul with every vice, the blackest that can be named, yet should he fall into the baptismal pool, he ascends from the divine waters purer than the beams of noon."<sup>3</sup> Cyril, Basil, Ambrose, and Augustine all speak in the same rhetorical style, and under their rhetoric there was the firm belief that all sin was washed away in baptism, and that the baptized person emerged from the font a new creature.

It was, indeed, perceived that many of these new creatures exhibited their old character and proclivities,

<sup>1</sup> Œhler gives ample information on this curious subject.

<sup>2</sup> On the side of one of the doors of Arbroath Monastic Church may be seen the carving of a fish. On many ancient fonts it is to be found.

<sup>3</sup> See many specimens of this extravagant eloquence in Taylor's "Ancient Christianity," vol. i. pp. 236, 237.

that impure and angry passions had not disappeared, that evil habits had not been abandoned. It was even remarked, when infants began to be baptized, that diseases which were supposed to belong to the corrupt nature broke out in the regenerated with as much virulence as ever, and that measles was as common among baptized as unbaptized children; in regard to all which some of the holy fathers were greatly exercised.<sup>1</sup> But still the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was not for a moment to be doubted, and so pious souls, anxious for heaven, argued from it, and rightly, that it would be well to defer baptism till the follies of youth and the guilty ambitions of middle life were gone, lest new sins should be contracted and the gloss of the new character rubbed off, and the full benefit of the sanctifying process lost. The fewer the days that intervened between baptism and death, the less could the volatile grace have evaporated. In such a case the baptized one went fresh from the holy laver to heaven, with all his defilements, however abominable, washed away, and no new ones contracted. Thus, when Eusebius stood at the deathbed of Constantine with the baptismal waters blessed and ready, "Now,"

<sup>1</sup> See Vossius, "De Baptismo." "Here also," says Bingham (xi. 1) "he (Vossius) determines the questions, how it comes to pass, that though sins are forgiven in baptism, yet concupiscence, the fuel or incentive of sin, remains still in the regenerate? And whence it is that after baptism we are still afflicted with diseases, and that as well infants as adult persons."

said the great but not guiltless emperor, "now is the time for me to enjoy the seal of immortality; now is the time for me to obtain the seal of salvation."<sup>1</sup>

When baptism was supposed to possess such sovereign virtue, the mere plunge in a stream or pool was no longer thought enough. The ancient simplicity of the rite gradually gave way to an elaborate ceremonial. We have symptoms of change in the beginning of the second century, and in a hundred years more the baptism of John and of Jesus was scarcely recognisable. When the candidates had finished their course of instruction and were ready for the regenerating bath, they were required to fast for at least seven days, during which time the exorcist came to them and by powerful incantations drove all demons and evil spirits out of them.<sup>2</sup> They were now ready for the final ceremonies. These were performed in the baptistery adjoining the church. They might be performed on any festival, but the Epiphany, Easter, and Whitsunday were the favourite times, Easter most of

<sup>1</sup> "De Vita Constant.," lib. iv. cap. lxii.

<sup>2</sup> It is well known that exorcists formed an order by themselves in the Patristic Church. The practice of exorcism before baptism drifted into the early Anglican Church. In the first "Book of Common Prayer of Edward VI.," dated 1549, the priest, on taking the child into his arms at the font, is required to use these words—"I command thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out of and depart from these infants; remember, thou cursed spirit, thy sentence, remember the day to be at hand wherein thou shalt burn in fire everlasting. And presume not hereafter to exercise any tyranny toward these infants, whom Christ hath bought with his precious blood."

all ; for the dead in trespasses and sins were on that day to rise with Christ from their baptismal burial to newness of life. It was generally at night, amid lamps dimly burning. At such a time and hour more than a thousand candidates would be crowded together in the baptistery of a great city,<sup>1</sup> standing there in their tunics. Wheeling to the west at the word of command, they stretched out their arms in a defiant attitude, and cried aloud, "I renounce thee, Satan, and thy works, and thy pomps, and thy worship, and thine angels, and thine inventions, and all that belongs to thee."<sup>2</sup> Turning next to the east and lifting up their hands and eyes to heaven, they professed their faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in a form of words which, though varied at first, gradually took shape in the Nicene and Apostles' creeds.

They were now done with the world, and in token of this they were stripped of their tunics, and stood naked before the presbyter or bishop—like Adam in Paradise, or Christ upon the cross ; for such were the similitudes employed.<sup>3</sup> But not yet were they ready

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, quoting Palladius in his "Life of Chrysostom," says that on one occasion more than three thousand persons were baptized in the Church of Constantinople (book xi. chap. vi.)

<sup>2</sup> A vestige of this remains in the baptismal service of the Church of England. *Quest.* Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them ? *Ans.* I renounce them all.

<sup>3</sup> "As soon as you came into the inner part of the baptistery,"

for the bath. Their bodies were anointed with chrism, and the sign of the cross was made on their foreheads, and while this was doing the water was being consecrated.<sup>1</sup> And now, one by one, they were dipped three times in the pool in the name of the three-one God; and they emerged from it as born a second time. Milk and honey were now given them—the food of new-born babes, and the food of the heavenly Canaan. Anointed once more with oil, they were invested with white garments as a symbol of their spotless innocence, and then they received the kiss of peace and brotherhood.<sup>2</sup> As baptized persons

says Cyril, addressing persons newly baptized, “you put off your clothes, an emblem of putting off the old man with his deeds; and being thus divested, you stood naked, imitating Christ, who was naked on the cross. . . . You were naked in the sight of men, and were not ashamed, in thus imitating the first man, Adam, who was naked in Paradise, and was not ashamed.” “Catech. Myst.,” quoted by Bingham (book xi. chap. xi.), with many other passages from Chrysostom, Augustine, and Ambrose, to the same effect. Chrysostom tells how the Church was once attacked, when baptisms were going on, and the women fled naked for fear of violence. (“Ep ad Innocent.”)

<sup>1</sup> It was by this consecration the water received its regenerating power. It was now frequently likened to the blood of Christ, and was, in fact, thought to be changed into the blood of Christ. “The baptismal water is red,” says Augustine, “when once it is consecrated by the blood of Christ.” “In baptism,” says Prosper, “we are dipped in blood.” “The Ethiopian eunuch,” says Jerome, “was baptized in the blood of Christ about whom he was reading.” Cyril of Alexandria frequently used the word *μεταστοιχείωσις* when speaking of the baptismal water. See Bingham, book xi. chap. x., also Rawling’s “Hist. of Baptism,” p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> In the first “Book of Edward VI.,” we find the white garment still in use. The priest says, “Take this white vesture for a token of the innocence, which by God’s grace in His holy sacrament of baptism is given unto thee.” This and much else was omitted in the second

they were now ranked among the illuminated, for they had been initiated into the highest mystery of the faith. Finally, the bishop or presbyter laid his hands upon them, and confirmed them; and before the dawn of morning the Eucharist was administered to them, and this in the case of infants as well as of adults. Such was baptism in the Patristic age, and for centuries afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

For years the catechumen had been looking forward to this natal day and the unveiling of the great mystery, and now, when it was unveiled, he must have felt he was subjected to a disappointment, if not to a cheat. There was nothing but a cold bath, with a ceremonial mainly borrowed from the heathen temples. But it is generally so with mysteries. When Pompey, with profane and curious foot, penetrated beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies, he found nothing.

Whatever the neophytes felt, it would appear the bishop fancied they must be filled with wonderment at what they had seen and experienced, as may be gathered from the following extract from one of Ambrose's homilies, delivered to the newly baptized in the church of Milan in the fourth century; and which I quote, because it gives in a short compass almost all the

"Book." The white garment still remains in confirmation, which was originally connected with baptism.

<sup>1</sup> See Tertullian, "De Baptismo;" "Apostolical Constitutions," book vii.; Bingham, book xi.; Stanley's "Constitutions," chap. i.; Wall on "Baptism," etc.



ceremonies of Patristic baptism. “We have spoken,” says the famous bishop, “every day of morality, and proposed to you the examples of the patriarchs and prophets. . . . It is now time to discourse to you of the mysteries, and explain the sacraments to you ; for if we had explained them before you were initiated, we should have thought that we had profaned rather than revealed them. Besides, the light of the mysteries which you did not expect, has astonished you more than if we had instructed you. Open therefore now your ears to receive the words of eternal life, which we signified to you when we celebrated the ceremony, by saying ‘Ephatha.’ . . . At last you are introduced into the place where the sacrament of baptism is administered. You are obliged to renounce the devil and his works, the world and its pomps and pleasures. You found in this place the waters, and a priest who consecrated them. Your body was plunged into this water, and the Holy Spirit descended upon it. Do not imagine it is the water which purifies you, it is the Holy Spirit. There are three things in baptism—the Water, the Blood, and the Spirit, and without these three the sacrament is not complete. Neither is the remission of sin nor grace received unless it be in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The baptism of Jews and infidels does not purify at all ; it is the Holy Ghost, which descended formerly under the figure of a dove, which sanctifies the water. We must not consider

the merit of the priest, for it is our Lord Jesus Christ who baptizes. You made profession of believing in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. After this you drew near to the priest; he anointed you, and your feet were washed. This sacrament blots out your hereditary sins; and the baptism blots out the sins you have voluntarily committed. After this you received white garments, to signify that you were stripped of sin and clothed with innocence. You received the seal of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of wisdom and of power. . . . Afterwards you run to the heavenly feast, and see the altar prepared, where you receive a nourishment infinitely exceeding that of manna, a food more excellent than that of angels; it is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Body of Life, the incorruptible Manna, the Truth, of which the manna was only a figure.”<sup>1</sup>

As baptism was regeneration, and as no one could be saved unless he were regenerated, it followed that no one could be saved unless he were baptized. This not only gave force to the preaching of the fathers when they cried out against the danger of deferring baptism till sickness or old age, but led to another change as to the recipients of baptism infinitely more important than any change in the ceremonial. Infant baptism is never heard of during the first hundred and fifty years of the Church's history. Tertullian mentions it, but he mentions it as a custom that was

<sup>1</sup> This translation is taken from Dupin on “Ambrose.”

just coming into vogue in his day, and he remonstrates against it. He even thought that young people should not be baptized till they were married, lest they should misbehave and discredit their spiritual birth.<sup>1</sup> But, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Tertullian, infant baptism came slowly into use. For, if there was a danger of a baptized person disgracing his baptismal profession, there was a still greater danger of an unbaptized infant dying and being damned for ever. So great a calamity must by all means be prevented, and more especially when it could be prevented by the easy method of dipping the infant in lukewarm water. Every mother would cry out for this. But an old custom is not easily set aside. Nor was it easy to get rid of the obvious intention of baptism—the admission of a convert into the Christian Church and his initiation into its mysteries on his open profession of the Christian faith. As long as baptism was of this kind there was something to be said for its being regarded as tantamount to regeneration ; for it might be esteemed, by the more intelligent at least, as simply the outward seal of the testimony the convert had given as to his

<sup>1</sup> “De Baptismo.” In the “Apostolic Constitutions,” which are supposed to be nearly synchronous with Tertullian, we have the injunction : “Do you also baptize your infants, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ?” (book vi.) This may indicate there were different opinions about infant baptism at the close of the second century, or the passage may be the interpolation of a later period.

faith in the Saviour. But, if unconscious infants were to be baptized, how could there be such a change unless it were effected by magic, altogether apart from faith and knowledge?

So adult baptism continued to be the rule, and infant baptism the exception, for at least two centuries more. Even in the fourth century Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine, though they had Christian mothers, were not baptized till they were grown up to manhood. But when Augustine, in his great controversy with Pelagius, emphasised more strongly than ever the doctrine that baptism was absolutely essential to salvation—that it only could wipe out original sin—that all unbaptized persons, whatever their virtues or their worth, whatever their age or condition, must perish everlastingly—people everywhere crowded to the font as the only way of escape from so dreadful a doom.

The preachers now encouraged this feeling. Thus, in a homily on baptism condemning those who put off their baptism till they were dying, Chrysostom thus declaims — “Although,” says he, “the sacraments contain the same grace for all, all may not receive them alike. Those who defer their baptism receive it lying on their beds; you receive it in the bosom of the Church, which is the mother of all the faithful; they receive it weeping, you with joy; they with groans, you with thanksgivings; they in the heat of a fever, you under a sense of the divine goodness.

In the one case everything is in harmony with the grace received ; in the other case everything is out of harmony with it. In the case of the sick and dying there are sobbings and tears while the sacrament is being administered : children cry, the wife tears her hair, friends are downcast, servants shed tears, the whole house is in mourning, and the mind of the sick person is most disturbed of all. In the midst of this universal distress the priest comes in, and his presence is more dreadful than the sickness itself. His visit is the sign that all hope of recovery is gone, and is more fraught with despair than the sentence of the physician.”<sup>1</sup>

But such deathbed scenes were as nothing compared with the result of a man dying unbaptized. It was, moreover, seen that the doctrine of Augustine,—so cheering when looked at from the one side, so terrible when regarded from the other,—condemned to eternal death not only the saints and heroes of the heathen world, but the patriarchs and prophets, the evangelists and apostles, and many of the confessors and martyrs who had died without baptism. What was to be done to rescue these, and yet preserve the savage consistency of Augustine and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 418), which had given its stamp to his teaching ?

Too great stringency on one side almost always

<sup>1</sup> “Hom. De Bapt. Christ.” For this translation see Dupin on “Chrysostom.”

compels a proportionable laxity on the other, and so it was here. The self-satisfied Christians were quite content to allow Socrates and Plato, Seneca and the Antonines, and the billions of virtuous pagans who had done their best in their day, to expiate their want of baptism in the burning abyss. For them there was no help, and no hope, and but little sympathy. But something must be done for the others. The martyrs, it was held, were baptized in their own blood. The Apostles were baptized in the spray during the storm on the Lake of Galilee. The patriarchs and prophets had gone to hell—it could not be helped—but it was thought (though not till long afterwards) that Christ in His descent to hell had rescued them, and led them triumphantly up to heaven.<sup>1</sup> The penitent thief on the cross was a great difficulty ; but it was held that some of the blood and water from Christ's wounded side must have spouted upon him, and that thus he was baptized with the holiest of all baptisms, and so that very night admitted to paradise. To such miserable shifts were the defenders of this inhuman doctrine forced to resort.

But the very inhumanity of the doctrine hastened on the most humane development of it. Christian mothers were thinking more of their own children

<sup>1</sup> Hermas, in his "Pastor," in a curious but not very lucid passage, seems to have a different theory, and to say that the Apostles after death went down to the abodes of the dead and baptized the Old Testament worthies. "They descended with them into the water and ascended again." Book iii. simil. 9, chap. xvi.



than of either patriarchs or pagans. Their salvation must be assured. They must be baptized at once. And there were good scriptural analogies and texts to support their motherly instincts. It was easy to frame an analogy between circumcision and baptism. Hebrew children were circumcised on the eighth day. Christian children should not wait even so long—they should be baptized as soon as they were born, lest unhappily they should die and be lost eternally. But stronger and better than this analogy was the fact that Jesus had loved children, had taken them up in His arms and blessed them. Those who had the benediction of Jesus might surely have His baptism. “Of such are the kingdom of heaven,” these were His words. The theologians saw at once that they must have them baptized, lest the innocents should go to heaven without baptism, and so refute their whole system of theology. Thus infant baptism came daily more and more into use and was soon universal. It was a startling departure from the original institution and the usage of three or four hundred years. But now that it is established, we look upon it as a beneficent arrangement that our little children should be recognised as members of the Church in their early infancy ; and we know that such is the omnipotence of parental instruction and example, that they grow up as certainly Christian as if they had pledged their own faith at the font.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I do not think it necessary to say anything about godfathers and

Change leads to change. Immersion was the only mode of baptism in the Apostolic Church. No other would have been understood. But when baptism no longer immediately followed conversion, when it was frequently deferred till death was near, immersion in such a case was impossible. When infant baptism became common the necessity for some relaxation of the rule became still more pressing. You could not take a dying man from his bed, nor a sickly child from its mother's lap and plunge it in cold water. Already in the second century there are indications of some yielding to circumstances. In the passage in the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," which I previously quoted, we are told that where cold water could not be used warm might; and that where a bath could not be resorted to it was enough to pour water three times on the head.<sup>1</sup> Here was the first beginning of what were afterwards called clinical baptisms—baptisms accommodated to the babe of a day old, to the sick and the dying. When Christianity pushed its way northward among barbarians living amid dark forests and by frozen rivers, averse to being plunged in the icy stream, the accommodating missionaries of the new faith insisted only on

godmothers, as the arrangement does not enter intimately into the nature of this sacrament. The parents were the first sponsors, as they are the natural ones, and relations or church officials were afterwards introduced. Those curious in this matter may consult Bingham or Wall. At first the sponsors answered, not as for the infants, but as if they were the infants.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vii.

such a baptism as had hitherto been reserved for cradles and deathbeds. Sprinkling instead of immersion became common in cold latitudes, but by no means universal. The German "taufen" means to dip.<sup>1</sup> The original mode stiffly kept its ground, and it took a thousand years still to beat it off the field. By the thirteenth century it was disappearing, but when the Reformation came it was not extinct. Calvin allowed either mode.<sup>2</sup> Both Queen Elizabeth and King Edward VI. were immersed. According to the rubric for the public baptism of infants in the Church of England at this day, the infant is to be dipped "discreetly and warily" if it is certified that it can endure it; while those of riper years may be either dipped or have the water poured on them.<sup>3</sup>

Even yet the original method of immersion divides Christendom with the more modern method of sprinkling. In the great Eastern Church immersion is the only method of baptism known. It is joyfully submitted to amid the snows of Russia and on the frozen plains of Siberia as well as by the warm rivers of Greece and Ethiopia. In the cathedral of Milan alone, of all the churches of the West, is

<sup>1</sup> To dub a knight means, according to some philologists, to dip him. It is certain the Knights of the Bath were once bathed or dipped. It was the baptism of chivalry. The knights must be pure. (See Stanley's "Institutions," chap. i.) According to others, however, to dub is to strike—as with a sword.

<sup>2</sup> "Institutes," iv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Rubric in the "public baptism of such as are of riper years."

immersion still adhered to. Among the Baptists, more numerous in the new world than the old, it is an article of faith. Complete immersion in water, after a profession of Christian belief by a person of mature years and good character, is the only way of admission to the Church. It is impossible to deny that in this they conform themselves to the usage of the apostolic age.

As might be expected, climate exercised an important influence in spreading the mode of baptism by sprinkling. No doubt the geographical line which separates the one mode from the other is a very wavy one, but it is in cold countries mainly that sprinkling is practised, and in warm countries, with a few exceptions, that immersion is retained. The defence of the innovation is that it is more comfortable, more convenient, more safe; and that as the water is but a symbol, with no virtue in itself, and the whole affair but a ceremonial, it does not matter whether a few drops only or a whole ocean be employed.<sup>1</sup>

It is highly instructive to mark the mutations of this religious rite under the pressure of an energetic belief. At first it was simply the entrance ceremony by which a convert was received into the church, and was accordingly administered so soon as the convert made a profession of his faith. When the belief grew that it washed away all past sins, prudent

<sup>1</sup> Of course this apology does not avail to those who think the water is more than a symbol, and the rite more than a ceremony.

people deferred the purifying process as long as possible, that they might gain the glory of heaven without losing the pleasures of earth. It does not seem to have been yet thought that the want of baptism necessarily implied eternal ruin.<sup>1</sup> But when this side of the doctrine began to be clearly seen—when mothers were led to contemplate their lost infants weltering in eternal flames because they had not been baptized—it was no longer the decrepit and the dying, but the new-born babe that was carried to the baptismal font, that it might be born again. Thus the same belief, looked at from different aspects, led first to the postponement of baptism till the approach of death, and then to its hurried performance immediately after birth. This led again, as we have seen, to a change in the mode of administration from immersion to sprinkling. But the force of this belief had not yet exhausted itself. It was possible no bishop, no priest, might be at hand when an unbaptized infant was dying: in that case a layman might administer the saving rite; or, if a layman was not to be found, a woman might do it.<sup>2</sup> In no case must the infant be allowed to perish. So it is humanely ordered to this day in the Roman Church—the church which, above all others,

<sup>1</sup> It must be acknowledged that there are indications that this idea had dawned very early on some minds at least, as may be seen in the “Pastor” of Hermas, and in Tertullian.

<sup>2</sup> This in spite of the fourth Council of Carthage, which had declared that women were not to baptize.

insists on the necessity of apostolic ordination for the conveyance of sacramental grace. Strong as the belief in apostolicity is, it gave way at this point under the pressure of a feeling stronger still.<sup>1</sup> In this way was baptism metamorphosed. Would a resuscitated apostle have recognised in the sprinkling of a few drops of tepid water on the face of an unconscious child by its nurse, the same ordinance as that in which eighteen hundred years before he plunged in a pool a new proselyte who had penitentially confessed his sins and made profession of his faith in Jesus?

But results more marvellous still followed the belief in baptismal regeneration. If sprinkling an unconscious infant with consecrated water worked so tremendous a change, why should it not have a similar effect on a dead man or woman? So men reasoned, and the baptism of those who had died unbaptized came into use. Who could forbid a thing so reasonable and so humane? Yet, after a time, some people did speak against it, and so it was stopped. But still further, if the virtue was in the consecrated water, altogether apart from the faith or feelings of the recipient, why should not inanimate

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, contrary to the usage of his church, argues for female baptism in cases of extreme necessity. He believed, as an orthodox theologian, that baptism was necessary to salvation, and his humane instincts would not allow him to let an infant die and be tormented for ever for want of baptism, though there was no one at hand but a woman to administer it.



things, especially things consecrated to sacred uses, such as church-bells, be baptized? Besides, both the Jews and the heathens were accustomed to sprinkle their sacred utensils with lustral water. Thus it came about, in course of time, that not only babies but church bells were baptized. They had their godfathers and godmothers, who answered for their good behaviour, they were duly sprinkled in the name of the Trinity, they received a Christian name, and henceforward they had power to keep away all evil spirits from the church in whose tower they hung.<sup>1</sup> Truly a strange development of religious belief, but logical enough, and perhaps, after all, not more irrational than the consecration of churches and churchyards.

If bells were baptized domestic animals might at least be sprinkled with holy water. And so it is annually in the pontifical city of Rome. In the month of January there is a festival known as the benediction of horses, when the inhabitants of the sacred city and its neighbourhood send all their horses, asses, and other beasts of burden to the convent of St. Anthony, where, for a small gratuity, they are sprinkled with holy water and blessed by a surpliced priest. The orthodox Roman coachman, with his more humble brother, the ass-driver, devoutly believes that with-

<sup>1</sup> See Sleidan, "Comment.," xxi. 388, quoted by Bingham. See also Southey's "Doctor." The christening of ships when they are launched in all countries, Protestant as well as Popish, is a survival of the old belief.

out this baptismal sprinkling some mishap would be sure to befall his beast during the year.<sup>1</sup> He is not far wrong if the premiss, sanctioned by popes and councils, from which he starts be right. The Roman steed will not go down on its knees if sprinkled by a priest. Such miraculous power should not be allowed to lie waste.

The belief, which has shaped the whole history of baptism, is still enshrined in the service books and creeds of most of the churches of Christendom. It has never been doubted in the Greek Church. It is an article of faith in the Roman Church. It is taught in the baptismal service of the Anglican Church.<sup>2</sup> There are still priests in Spain and clergymen in England who shudder at the thought of an unbaptized person being allowed burial in a churchyard.<sup>3</sup> They would shudder still more at the thought of his being admitted to heaven. The Calvinistic Churches are free from this reproach, and Calvin himself emphatically taught that unbaptized infants might be saved.<sup>4</sup> His doctrine of election is not half so inhuman as

<sup>1</sup> Middleton's "Letter from Rome," p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Goode, in his "Effects of Infant Baptism," has laboured learnedly and earnestly to show that the Catechism and the Baptismal Service do not mean what they say. Wilberforce has answered him in his "Doctrine of Holy Baptism." It is cheering to know it is a moot point, as indeed it has been since the Reformation.

<sup>3</sup> According to the first rubric in the Order for the Burial of the Dead, the service is not to be read "for any that die unbaptized." I believe that most enlightened clergymen greatly regret the existence of this rubric, and habitually ignore it. <sup>4</sup> "Institutes," iv. 15.

that of the insalvability of the unbaptized, and has, in fact, its counterpart in natural law. But the belief in baptismal regeneration and its dreadful corollaries, though still existing, is no longer the vigorous, influential belief it once was. In the striking language of Dean Stanley, the notions on this subject, still occasionally encountered, "are like the ghosts of former beliefs lingering in dens and caves of the Church, visiting here and there their ancient haunts, but almost everywhere receding, if slowly yet inevitably, from the light of day."<sup>1</sup> Romish ecclesiastics are still bound to believe that all unbaptized infants go to hell, but the more enlightened and humane amongst them hold that the little lost souls are confined there in a *limbo infantum*, which may be a place as pleasant as paradise, and only one degree inferior to heaven.<sup>2</sup> Among Anglicans the judicious Hooker, with a humanity which does him credit, argues that when Christians have died unbaptized, if they had only some thoughts of it, the will might be taken for the deed, and quotes St. Ambrose, who had tried by this logic to save his friend the Emperor Valentinian II., who had deferred the rite a little too long; and though he confesses that the case

<sup>1</sup> "Christian Institutions," chap. i.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Oxenham, in several articles in the "Contemporary Review." Even Augustine assigned them the mildest form of damnation. Peter Lombard, designated among schoolmen as the Master of the Sentences, advocated this more merciful belief. The 3d canon of Carthage (418 A.D.), which repudiates the idea of unbaptized infants having a more comfortable hell, is thought by some to be spurious.

of infants looked very black, as they could have had no will in the matter, they yet might be saved by the imputed good intentions of their parents.<sup>1</sup> In a like spirit, at the present day the bulk of the English clergy<sup>2</sup> do their best to explain away the objectionable phrases in their catechism and baptismal service, and if they do not altogether succeed, they yet believe what is rational in spite of them. Magic is everywhere being left off by ecclesiastics and given up to jugglers.

Such is the chequered history of baptism. But notwithstanding its transformations it has tenaciously retained its most essential features. Water is still used; the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is still pronounced; and, in all churches, it is still regarded as the entrance-rite. Though no more recognisable as apostolic baptism than an infant could be recognised in an old man, it has been, through all ages, the same sacrament—identical though changed. It can scarcely be said to have undergone development, in the strict sense of that word; for the baptism of the first century was really more rational than that of the nineteenth; but it has shown its capability of adapting itself to circumstances, and in that has been its vitality. It is certain that as the world now stands, if we were not all baptized in our infancy there are millions who would not be baptized

<sup>1</sup> "Eccles. Polity," book v. sect. 60.

<sup>2</sup> I hope I can say this with truth. I include all who are called Broad Church and Low Church, and I should think there are more besides.

as adults. It is still more certain that if immersion were insisted on in this cold country the baptismal roll would fall off. But the Church in this matter has recognised the fitness of things, or rather eternal law has ordained it, and baptism as it exists is another example of the survival of the fittest. Apostolic simplicity and Patristic ceremonial have, each in its turn, become extinct, the hard doctrines of Augustine and Aquinas are following them to the grave, but baptism in its new adaptation survives, and is perhaps more universal than ever.

## LECTURE V.

### THE SACRAMENTS : THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Lord's Supper has undergone still more marvellous transformations and developments in the course of its long history than baptism, and it has, from the first, been regarded with still deeper awe, albeit that baptism was believed to be tantamount to regeneration. Although, in a sense, instituted by Jesus on the evening previous to His death, in another sense it grew out of the Passover feast, and may be looked on as a continuation of it. Jesus seized upon the ancient custom of the bath and consecrated it as Christian baptism. In like manner He evolved out of the national paschal supper the holy supper, by which the Christian society still commemorates its Founder. To understand the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we must therefore go back to the Passover supper, and see its origin, its history, and its mode of celebration.

According to Jewish tradition the Passover supper



was first eaten on the night of the flight from Egypt. And its annual celebration ever afterwards was arranged so as to be a kind of dramatic representation of what took place on that eventful evening. In commemoration of their having been originally a nomadic people, with great flocks and herds, every household had a lamb or kid for supper, slain as a sacrifice and afterwards roasted whole, after the manner of the ancient East. It was eaten in haste, both men and women standing, with their sandals on their feet, their staffs in their hand, and their loose garments girt up as ready to start instantly on a journey. They ate it with cakes of unleavened bread, to indicate that in the hurry of departure the women had no time to leaven their dough, and with bitter herbs to symbolise the bitter slavery their ancestors had escaped from.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the original paschal supper ; but not even a divinely instituted feast can escape the influence of its surroundings, and its tendency to adapt itself to changed circumstances. In the days of Jesus the original passover had been modified in several important particulars. The lamb now required to be slain in the temple, but it might be slain by the head of the house himself or by his substitute — a survival of the primitive universal priesthood. It was no longer eaten standing or with sandalled feet. The guests reclined upon mats, ac-

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xii.

according to the custom of the time, when eating. Red wine, mixed with water, was also on the table; and the wine-cup was pushed round from guest to guest at stated intervals. There was also on the table a bowl containing a thick gruel or batter (the *charoset*) made up of different fruits mixed with vinegar. It symbolised the brick-clay of Egypt; and it was by dipping in this dish simultaneously with Judas that Jesus indicated the traitor.<sup>1</sup>

The feast was always held on the 15th of the vernal, equinoctial month Nisan, and at the time of the full moon. It was held with enthusiastic rejoicings, for it stirred up at once the religious and the patriotic feelings of the people. It commemorated their national deliverance — their transition from slavery to freedom. It was like the annual celebration of the Declaration of Independence in the United States of America. It evoked such feelings as would be evoked in Scotland were the victory of Bannockburn commemorated by a yearly holiday. A striking characteristic of the feast was the singing at intervals of sacred songs of victory and triumph.<sup>2</sup> They were called the Hallel, and are extant in Psalms cxiii.-cxviii. We may fancy with what festive rapture they would chant in their wild monotonous way—"When Israel went forth out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah became his

<sup>1</sup> Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. v. pp. 301-303; Farrar's "Life of Christ," chap. lv.; Lightfoot, pp. 376, 377.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

sanctuary, Israel his dominion. The sea saw it, and fled : Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like young sheep. What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest ? thou Jordan, that thou turnest back ? Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams ; ye little hills, like young sheep ? Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob ; which turned the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of waters.”<sup>1</sup> Or, again, when they chanted—“ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake. Wherefore should the nations say, Where is now their God ? But our God is in the heavens : he hath done whatsoever he pleased. . . . We will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore.”<sup>2</sup>

In these triumphal hymns the Jews, according to their wont, ascribed all the glory of their deliverance to Jehovah, and thus religion gave additional ardour to patriotism. Moreover, the feast was a feast after a sacrifice—a thing common among all ancient nations ; for they never dreamt that a religious observance was inconsistent with the highest hilarity. On account of the destruction of the temple the Jews can now observe the passover only with maimed rites ; but a small remnant of Samaritans still observe it on their holy hill of Girizim

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. cxv.

with something like the ancient ritual, and the lambs are slain, roasted, and eaten after a screaming recital of the deeds of the ancient Hebrews, and amid loud shoutings of joy and general merriment.<sup>1</sup>

We may now picture to ourselves the scene when Jesus, with His disciples, in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, ate His last paschal supper, and instituted the modified form of it which continues in the Christian Church—the oldest religious festival in the world. They all reclined on mats placed round the table, John reclining on the same mat with Jesus.<sup>2</sup> They leaned on their left elbow while they ate, and helped themselves with their right hand, which was free. A low round or semicircular table was in the centre with the usual provision of the feast—the lamb, the unleavened cakes, the bitter herbs, the bowls of wine, the dish of fruit-batter and vinegar.<sup>3</sup> Some think there was also dried fish, as fish was the usual accompaniment of bread in Jewish households, and in some of the earliest representations of the supper in the catacombs, fish is placed on the cakes.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stanley's "Jewish Church," vol. i. app. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Not to speak of the well-known custom of reclining at table, the words used in all the gospels indicate this position—*ἀνέκειτο* (Matt. xxvi. 20), *ἀνακειμένων* (Mark xiv. 18), *ἀνέπεσε* (Luke xxii. 14), *ἀνακείμενος* (John xiii. 23).

<sup>3</sup> Mr Goodwyn Lewis, after a residence of some years in Syria, has produced a striking picture of the "Last Supper," much more realistic than the great picture of Leonardo Da Vinci, or of any other painter, in which the figures are grouped nearly as described here.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley's "Institutions," chap. iii. pp. 50, 51; Renan's "Vie de Jesus," p. 303.

It was evening: the sun was down in the west, the stars were dimly out in the sky; but the full-orbed moon shed her pale light over the apartment, and on the anxious faces of the guests, mingling with the ruddy glimmer of the lamps. On ordinary occasions there would be no anxiety, all would be light and joy. But on this occasion there was an invisible death's-head at the feast. Jesus had a sure presentiment that His end was near, and that one of His disciples was to prove a traitor—enough to cast a gloom over any company on any occasion, even the most festive. The feast began with a cup of wine and water. Wine was always so mixed in Hebrew households. Then followed a taste of the bitter herbs—lettuce, parsley, cress, etc., and pieces of bread dipped in the vinegar and fruit-batter—the sop of Judas. This done, the first part of the Hallel was chanted, and at the close of the chant the second cup of wine was sent round. Next came the supper proper—the eating of the roasted lamb.<sup>1</sup> Other ceremonies followed, but it was probably at this point Jesus interrupted the ordinary course of the feast by instituting the Christian supper,—or more properly, took the bread and wine which were still to be eaten and drunk, and having given thanks in the usual words—“Blessed be he who bringeth forth bread out of the earth,” asked His disciples to meet frequently and take a simple social supper of these

<sup>1</sup> Keim, vol. v. pp. 305-307.

(without the sacrificial lamb) in memory of Him. "As they were eating," says Matthew, "Jesus took bread and blessed and brake it, and he gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many unto the remission of sins."<sup>1</sup> St. Paul says the cup was given after supper,<sup>2</sup> and was probably the fourth cup which, in the ordinary course of the feast, would be handed round.<sup>3</sup> After this they sang a hymn—doubtless the remainder of the Hallel—the 116th, 117th, and 118th Psalms. The ear of Christendom still hears their wailing voices, full of unutterable woe, and yet with some high notes of triumph, and some soft cadences that spoke of relief and quiet rest. So ended the last Passover Supper for Jesus and the first Christian Supper for Him and His followers.

It is impossible to doubt that the meaning of the sacred supper is contained in the words reported by both Paul and Luke as spoken by Jesus—*This do in remembrance of me*. Jesus, with the strong human sympathy which was characteristic of Him, wished His friends to meet and take a bread and wine supper together as often as they could, both to maintain their friendly feelings, and to perpetuate His memory. It was to be a memorial festival, not a feast after a sacrifice, as the Passover Supper was, but a feast with

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 26-28.<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 25.<sup>3</sup> Keim, vol. v. p. 317.



every sacrificial element eliminated. The lamb was not used, only the bread and wine.

No one who knows what human nature is will wonder that a common meal should be made the most sacred institution of the Christian religion. In all times, and in all lands, social meals have served the high purpose of cementing friendships, extinguishing enmities, stimulating enthusiasms, and commemorating the virtues of the illustrious dead. The Arab who takes salt with you will never betray you; the man who drinks wine with you thereby pledges himself to be your friend. It is no hyperbole to say that common meals, especially meals where all ranks of society are brought together, have done a great deal not only to civilise but to Christianise the world. All such meals are, in a manner, sacred. The ancients, wiser than we, understood the religion of feasting. The Jews had their religious festivals. So had every pagan nation known to us. The Greeks and Latins had not only their sacrificial feasts in their temples, but their club feasts in gardens or elsewhere, and not unfrequently encircling an altar, and their funeral feasts in the memorial cells of the departed.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Supper was therefore no new thing—no more than was baptism. Jews and Gentiles would alike understand it; and the poor and needy who came hungry, and were fed, would have in it a fore-

<sup>1</sup> Renan, "Les Apôtres," pp. 351-354; Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," p. 387; Stanley's "Institutions," pp. 42, 43.

taste of the coming kingdom of God, where, it was said, they were to hunger no more, neither thirst any more.

Faithful to the Master's request, the disciples were accustomed to meet from the very first and sup together, "to break bread," as the phrase is in the Acts of the Apostles. It is a general opinion, supported by high historical authorities, that they did this daily; but the passage on which this opinion is based does not warrant such an interpretation. "And day by day continuing with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart."<sup>1</sup> It is by no means certain that "day by day" (*καθ' ἡμέραν*) refers to the "breaking of bread" as well as to the visits to the temple, and it is further uncertain, whether by "breaking bread at home" is meant specially the Lord's Supper, or the ordinary communistic meal of the Jerusalem Christians. The words which follow—"They did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart"—seem to indicate the latter meaning. But it is probable that in those first days there was little, if any, distinction between the sacred supper and these communistic meals. With them every meal was sacred and commemorative of Jesus. If not on every day, certainly on every first day of the week they met to eat the Lord's Supper. "Upon the first day of the week," says the author of

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 46.

the Acts, "when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow."<sup>1</sup> This brief notice is confirmed by Pliny's letter to Trajan<sup>2</sup> (*circa* A.D. 112), and by a passage in Justin's "First Apology" (*circa* A.D. 150) in which the first day is denominated Sunday, after the Græco-Roman style.<sup>3</sup>

But vastly more important than these notices of the first Christian suppers at Jerusalem is the stern rebuke which Paul administers to the Corinthian converts for the abuse of the evening meal which had taken place at their meetings. Corinth was one of the most dissolute cities of the period. Though standing on Greek soil it could scarcely be called a Greek city. The old city had been destroyed by Mummius two hundred years before this—it lay in ruins for a century—and a new city was then erected on its site by Julius Cæsar, and constituted a Roman colony. Its situation on the narrow neck of land between the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs, made it an important shipping town. Cenchrea was one of its ports. It was the rendezvous of all nationalities, Greeks, Latins, Syrians, Egyptians, and of all kinds of men, merchants, mariners, adventurers, and wealthy profligates; and, of course, of a large class of reprobates, male and female, who traded on the vices and follies of the others.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. xcvi.

<sup>3</sup> "Apology," chap. lxvii.

<sup>4</sup> Renan, "St. Paul," chap. viii.

In the midst of this mixed, immoral community Paul managed to gain converts to Christianity, and to form a Christian society. The reaction from the prevailing manners would help him with those who had a higher ideal of life than mere sensuality. But it was almost impossible for a small society to live in such a hotbed of vice without feeling the influence of its surroundings. So it proved to be in the case of the Corinthian Christians. The letters which Paul wrote them too plainly prove this. Not to mention other matters, still graver, the Holy Supper had been made a scene of selfishness and excess. It was a real evening meal in those days,<sup>1</sup> and those who came frequently brought their provisions along with them, the well-to-do bringing not only enough for themselves but something for their poorer brothers and sisters, that all might share alike. But, in the Corinthian gatherings, some, without any regard to decency or order, were in the habit of hungrily devouring their own provisions without waiting to see if the poor were provided for, and even drinking the wine to excess ; and the result was, that some left the meeting intoxicated, and others without having had any supper at all. "When you assemble yourselves together," writes Paul, with just indignation, "it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper ; for in your

<sup>1</sup> The word Supper implies this : so the German Abendmahl. When we go back to the Greek and Latin we get words of the same import, *δειπνον*, *cœna*.

eating, each one taketh before other his own supper ; and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What ? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? or despise ye the congregation of God, and put them to shame that have not ?”<sup>1</sup> He refers to poor, houseless, supperless wretches who had come to the Christian first-day meeting expecting to receive a kindly welcome and a fraternal supper of bread and wine, but had been sent empty away, by men who had already forgotten the maxims of their Master, and were more under the influence of Corinthian luxury than of Christian love.<sup>2</sup>

This was the first known abuse of the Christian supper, and it lets in the clearest light on the character of the institution in those early days. The abuses which followed were mostly of the very opposite kind ; and were, perhaps, in some degree to be traced to the revulsion from the Corinthian irregularities and their censure by the Apostle.

After this darkness settles down upon the Church and its institutions, and it is forty or fifty years before we hear of the Lord's Supper again. But, in the autumn of the year 112, Pliny wrote his celebrated

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 20-22.

<sup>2</sup> Renan says : “ A l'origine, c'était un vrai souper, ou chacun mangeait selon sa faim, seulement avec une haute intention mystique. Le repas commençait par une prière. Comme dans les dîners des confréries païennes, chacun arrivait avec sa sportule et consommait ce qu'il avait apporté ; l'Eglise fournissait sans doute les accessoires, tels que l'eau chaude, les sardines, ce qu'on appelait le *ministerium*. ( “ St. Paul,” pp. 264, 265.)

letter to the Emperor Trajan, already referred to, asking how he was to deal with the Christians, who abounded in his province ; and in this most precious document we get a glimpse of the Christians at their sacred meal once more. "The Christians," said the proconsul of Bithynia, "assembled on a certain stated day, before it was light, to sing responsively among themselves hymns to Christ, as to a God, binding themselves by an oath<sup>1</sup> not to be guilty of any wickedness ; not to steal nor to rob, not to commit adultery nor break their faith when plighted, nor to deny the deposits in their hands whenever called upon to restore them. These ceremonies performed, they usually departed and came together again to take a meal, the meat of which was innocent and eaten promiscuously."<sup>2</sup> Here was the apostolic evening meal still existing in its original form.

The apostolic fathers (so called) are silent as to the way in which the Lord's Supper was eaten in their day ;<sup>3</sup> but the author of the "Didache" was

<sup>1</sup> Epist. xcvi. The word here translated "oath" is *sacramentum* in the original ; but it is not in that we have the reference to the primitive Christian supper. It is in the following sentence where we are told of their evening meal.

<sup>2</sup> There is probably a reference here to the horrid imputation of Thyestian banquets.

<sup>3</sup> In the pseudo-Ignatian Epistles there are two references to the Eucharist, but neither of them describes its mode of celebration. "Take ye heed, then, to have but one Eucharist, for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to the unity of His blood ; one altar as there is one bishop." ("Ad Philad.," chap. iv.) "Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist which is administered either by



probably a contemporary of Pliny's, or lived not many years after him, and in his luminous pages we have a most instructive passage. We give it entire. "Now concerning the Eucharist, thus give thanks; first, concerning the cup: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant, which thou hast made known to us through Jesus Christ thy servant; to thee be the glory for ever. And concerning the broken *bread*: We thank thee, our Father, for the life and the knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory for ever. Just as this broken bread was scattered over the hills and being gathered together became one, so let thy church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom, for thine is the glory and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever. But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, except those baptized into the Lord's name; for in regard to this the Lord hath said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs. Now, after ye are filled, thus do ye give thanks,"<sup>1</sup> etc. etc.

Thus, at the distance of a century from the institution, we have still a meal of which the guests ate

the bishop or by one to whom he has entrusted it. ("Ad Smyrn.," chap. viii.) All this is wanting in the Syriac version. Beyond all question it refers to a time posterior to the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" and Justin Martyr.

<sup>1</sup> Chaps. ix. x. The word in the original Greek, here translated *filled*, is ἐμπλησθηναί.

and drank till they were satisfied. And no official is instructed to give thanks, the instruction is addressed to all, and the form of thanksgiving is evidently borrowed from the short simple forms used at the Paschal feasts. The whole company were to say: "We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David thy servant." But as the prophetic spirit still existed in the Church, and must not be restrained, the supplementary advice is given: "Permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they please."<sup>1</sup> But even in this passage, though it testifies to historical conservatism, we have indications of change. The supper was now called the Eucharist, and none were permitted to eat or drink of it except the baptized.

The representations of the Supper found in the Roman catacombs probably belong to this period. Men and women are seated round a festive table, and in one striking scene in the catacomb of Marcellinus and Peter, two female figures are introduced—Irené (Peace) and Agapé (Love). They are probably intended to represent deaconesses, for Irené says *da calda* (give me the hot water), and Agapé says *misce mi* (mix for me), referring no doubt to the mixing of the wine with water.<sup>2</sup> An instructive picture, and so like to what we could suppose!

<sup>1</sup> Chap. x.

<sup>2</sup> Renan, "St. Paul," pp. 265, 266. Renan quotes as his authorities Aringhi, "Roma Subt.," ii. p. 119; "Bottari. Tav.," chap. xxvii. See also Stanley's "Institutions," chap. iii.

Justin may have written his "First Apology" some twenty or thirty years after the appearance of the "Teaching of the Apostles." In his day the sacrament of the supper was given to persons immediately after they were baptized. "Having ended the prayers," he says, "we salute one another with a kiss.<sup>1</sup> There are then brought to the president of the brethren (or, to that one of the brethren who was presiding)<sup>2</sup> bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at his hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. And when the president has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called deacons by us, give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced,

<sup>1</sup> This custom continued in the Latin Church down to the thirteenth century. In the Russian Church the clergy still kiss one another at the festival while the Nicene Creed is being recited. In the Coptic Church it continues as at the beginning, and the whole assembly kiss and are kissed. (See Stanley's "Institutions," chap. iii.) The Apostolic practice was revived in Scotland by the small sect of Glasites or Sandemanians, and defects or excesses in the kiss were (and perhaps still are) a frequent subject of discussion and discipline. See Cunningham's "Church History," vol. ii. p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> τῷ πρωεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν.

and to those who are absent they carry away a portion."<sup>1</sup>

Here there is still a meal, but it is no longer the simple homely meal of the early Jerusalem or Corinthian Church. It was now more methodised and under official rule. It is not said that the presbyter-bishop presided, but it is probable he did. The company no longer ate and drank at a common table till they were filled: the deacons carried to them the cup and the cake. It was in the transition stage: from being a supper it was becoming a sacrament. What is most significant of all, portions of the bread and wine were carried to the absent. We have an explanation of this development in a sentence which follows: "For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these . . . we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His Word . . . is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."<sup>2</sup>

Yes! a grim belief was now growing up among the Christians which converted the fraternal supper of Jesus into an awful mystery. The Master of the feast, in handing the bread and wine to His disciples, had said: "This is my body"—"This is the new covenant in my blood." What could this mean, argued some convert, with his mind filled with conceptions of the flesh and blood of victims at sacrificial feasts, but that the Christian victim had given them His very

<sup>1</sup> Chap. lxv.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. lxvi.

flesh and blood to feed upon? It was true He had purged the Paschal supper of the lamb before He constituted it the Christian supper; but that was only that He might substitute Himself—the Lamb of God—in its stead. It was true He had merely asked His friends to meet together after His death and eat a common meal in memory of Him; but no common meal and no act of memory could have the miraculous effects which were now attributed to the sacrament. His own words must be taken literally—they must eat His flesh and drink His blood, that so His divine life might be in them. The belief appears to have spread like an epidemic during the second century, and before the close of it had infected nearly the whole community. No horror seems to have taken hold of them. But the outside heathens—and the Jews who counted it a deadly sin to taste the blood even of an animal—heard the strange rumour with a shudder, that this new sect of Nazarenes at their midnight banquets feasted upon human flesh and blood, and in the midst of the sickening carnival indulged in promiscuous embraces—Thyestian banquets, Œdipodian loves, as the story went.<sup>1</sup> There was nothing in the whole pagan mythology so shocking. No wonder all decent people shunned the Christians; and that emperor after emperor did his

<sup>1</sup> Athenagoras' "Plea or Embassy" (*Πρεσβεία*), chap. iii.; Tertullian, "Apologeticus," iv. 7; Justin, "2 Apology," chap. xii.; "1 Apology," chap. xxvi.

best to extirpate them. The rumours were false, but the Christians had brought them upon themselves. False! according to the belief still prevalent throughout three-fourths of Christendom they were true.

This second-century belief influenced the whole future history of the sacrament. One of its first effects was to separate the sacrament from the Supper. When a river divides into two branches, who shall say which is the original stream? In the beginning the Supper was the sacrament—and, in very truth, there are few things more sacramental than a friendly meal—but the Eucharist was now much too awful a mystery to be associated with mere eating and drinking and Christian intercourse. The Supper became the “Agapé,” or love-feast, which was still held at night under the light of lamps as of old; and the Eucharistic Sacrament was given in the early morning to communicants who had not broken their fast.<sup>1</sup> The social meal had taken too strong a hold upon the society, crowded as it was with the poor and needy, to be altogether abandoned. But the sacrament must be associated with fasting and not with feasting.

In the second Epistle ascribed to Peter and in that ascribed to Jude there is a reference to love-feasts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “We take also, in meetings before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord hath commanded to be eaten at meal-times, and enjoined to be taken by all.” (Tertullian, “De Corona,” chap. iii.) Here there is a decided advance, with a reference to more primitive usages.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Peter ii. 13; Jude 12. The one is evidently either copied from the other, or they are both taken from a common source.



This appears to prove either that the Christian supper was sometimes spoken of as a love-feast as early as the first century, or that these letters are of second-century authorship. It was the end of the second century before the love-feast was separated from the Eucharist and held at a different time.<sup>1</sup> It was still, however, regarded as a sacred meal, and held in the church or other place of Christian meeting, and was accompanied by prayers, thanksgivings, and hymns. It was the true Lord's Supper. Tertullian gives us an account of these meetings in his "Apologeticus," and a spirited defence of them; for it would appear scandalous stories had been bruited abroad about them: "About the modest supper-room of the Christians," says he, "a great ado is made. Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greeks call it

<sup>1</sup> In the shorter Greek recension of the "pseudo-Ignatian Epistle to the Smyrnæans" we have this reference to the "Agapé"—"It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast" (chap. viii.) Here the love-feast is identical with the Lord's Supper. In the longer recension the same passage runs—"It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to offer, or to present sacrifice, or to celebrate a love-feast." Here there is evidence of great development. The supper has become an oblation, a sacrifice, and the love-feast is separated from it; but still it possesses so much sanctity that the bishop only could celebrate it. The separation of the Eucharist from the "Agapé" had taken place in the interval between these two recensions. There is similar ground for believing that the separation took place in the interval between the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" and the "Apostolic Constitutions." Thus ἐμπλησθῆναι in the former (chap. x.) is supplied by μετέλψιν in the latter (book vii. chap. xxvi.) Bishop Lightfoot is clearly wrong in supposing the separation took place in the time of Pliny or even earlier. See his "Apostolic Fathers," vol. ii. p. 52, *note*.

‘Agapé’ (love). Whatever it costs, our outlay in the name of piety is gain, since, with the good things of the feast, we benefit the needy: not as it is with you, do parasites aspire to the glory of satisfying their licentious propensities, selling themselves for a belly-feast to all disgraceful treatment; but as it is with God Himself, a peculiar respect is shown to the lowly. If the object of our feast be good, in the light of that consider its further regulations. As it is an act of religious service it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants, before reclining, taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger; as much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say it is enough, as those who remember that even during the night they have to worship God: they talk as those that know that the Lord is one of their auditors. After the hands are washed and the lights brought in, each is asked to stand forth and sing, as he best can, a hymn to God, either one from the Holy Scriptures or one of his own composing—and in this way he is tested as to how much he has drunk. As the feast commenced with prayer, so with prayer it is closed.”<sup>1</sup> A very pleasant, profitable evening, one should say, entirely befitting the Christian faith; and though one phrase may suggest that cases of intemperance occasionally happened (how could it be otherwise in this poor, imperfect world, where such things happen still?), we may believe it was very

<sup>1</sup> “Apologeticus,” chap. xxxix.

seldom, for drunkenness was never the besetting sin of the northern Africans.

One thing only lessens the weight of Tertullian's testimony. Some years afterwards, when he had become a Montanist, apparently forgetful of the pleasing picture of cheerful Christianity enjoying its innocent evening "Agapé," which he had given in his "Apology," he furiously inveighs against the same entertainments as occasions of gluttony, drunkenness, and whoredom.<sup>1</sup> It is possible these feasts may have changed for the worse even within the lifetime of a single man; but it seems more likely that in this case the change was mainly in Tertullian's own mind. He had become ascetic and fault-finding.

Nearly two centuries later Chrysostom gives us his account of these love-feasts. He traces their origin to the early Christian communism; the rich brought provisions with them to the church, and when they had all communicated in the Holy Mysteries, they sat down at a common table, rich and poor together, and ate a common meal<sup>2</sup>—all beautiful and good. But it was convenient for Chrysostom to forget that these "Agapai" were survivals of the original Lord's Supper rather than of the original Christian communism. The man who could passionately say, that if he had ever given the Eucharist

<sup>1</sup> "De Jejuniis," chap. xvii. See also Cyprian, Epist. 62, sect. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. 27 in 1 Cor.; Hom. 21, "Oportet hæreses esse"; Bingham, xv. 7, 6.

when not fasting, "Let my name be wiped out of the catalogue of bishops, yea, let Christ cast me out of His kingdom,"<sup>1</sup> was not likely to remember that the Eucharist was originally a supper. But now when these love-feasts were altogether dissevered from the Lord's Supper, and the very remembrance of their original identity, willingly or unwillingly, forgotten, their character changed, and new ideas were associated with them. Congregations began to give such entertainments on the anniversaries of martyrs; private individuals gave them on the death of friends; old heathen habits suggested this, and heathen onlookers recognised the reappearance of their old festivals under new names.<sup>2</sup> They were still held in churches and still patronised by the clergy. But they gradually lost their early innocence; drunkenness and worse than drunkenness became common at them; Ambrose, Augustine, and many others began to cry out against them; the councils of Laodiceæ,<sup>3</sup> about 363 A.D., and of Carthage,<sup>4</sup> in 397 A.D., both condemned them; but they continued still, and the Trullan council,<sup>5</sup> in 692 A.D., condemned them again, and after that they seemed to have been discontinued: not all at once, nor everywhere at once, but by degrees, till at last they entirely disappeared as a

<sup>1</sup> Epist. 125, ad Cyriacum. See Bingham, xv. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> For notices of the Parentalia, etc., and similar Christian festivals, see Giesler, vol. ii. pp. 50, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Canon 28.

<sup>4</sup> Canon 30.

<sup>5</sup> Canon 74.

disgrace to Christianity—the Christianity of which they were at one time the pride and the glory.

When the love-feasts disappeared the Lord's Supper in its first form was no longer to be found. They were its truest representatives, though not recognised by the Church as such, and finally cast out as an unclean thing. Like the Jerusalem Suppers in their purer days, like the Corinthian Suppers in their degenerate days, they preserved in the Church for five hundred years the fraternal, memorial meal, which the Lord's Supper was designed to be. They perished because that which was practicable in a small society was no longer possible in a vast community, many of the members of which were still reeking with the vices of paganism. A social supper may serve the highest ends of humanity, but it may also lead to the worst evils that afflict the world. For two hundred years the Lord's Supper was the strongest bond of union in the Church; for two hundred years more the love-feasts did much to link the rich and the poor together, and to sweeten the breath of a decaying society; but the abominations of the outside world could not be kept altogether out of the Christian meetings, and so the "Agapai" perished.

At the time of the Reformation a feeble attempt was made to revive them in England. "Some of the more fanatical and mad of the innovating party," says Dr. F. G. Lee, with horror at the thought, "adopting the Protestant method of interpretation of

Scripture, maintained that the Lord's Supper ought to be a well-prepared and substantial meal, at which the faithful could satisfy the cravings of hunger with a variety and abundance of meat and drink."<sup>1</sup> In the Corinthian Church, they argued, there had been a plentiful supper, whereas now, even in the Reformed Church, there was only a morsel of bread in mockery of a meal. These innovators, notwithstanding Dr. Lee's sneers, had rightly interpreted ecclesiastical history, but their endeavours to restore ancient usages failed, and it could not have been otherwise, for times had changed.

In these latter days the ancient "Agapai" have been revived in a new form and under a different name. We have now everywhere over Christendom congregational soirees, sometimes provided by the rich for the poor; we have free-breakfast tables and free-dinner tables, more especially on the Sundays, and these are furnished not merely to give food to the poor, but to bring the different classes of society together in fraternal meetings; to make the outcast, and lost, and wretched feel that they are cared for, that there is sympathy and even salvation for them, warm hearts to pity and strong hands to help; and when so it is, there is no table on earth more entitled to be called the Lord's Table.

When the "Agapai" were disappearing from the Patristic Church, the Eucharist, which was now held

<sup>1</sup> "The Church under Queen Elizabeth," vol. i. p. 91. "Zurich Letters," 2d series, 95.



to be the Holy Supper, though it was in no sense a supper, was gathering round it more and more mystery, and was being celebrated with increasing rites. No longer a meal, nor even associated with a meal, it was certain to drift away with the sacramental and sacrificial currents then flowing so strongly. Having lost its old character, it must take on a new one; and looking to the prevalent interpretation of the words of institution and the environment of magic, mystery, and heathenism, there could be no doubt as to what that would be. But vestiges of the more primitive ways remained in isolated places. Thus we are told by Socrates that "the Egyptians in the neighbourhood of Alexandria and the inhabitants of Thebais hold their religious meetings on the Sabbath, but do not participate of the mysteries in the manner usual among Christians in general; for after having eaten and satisfied themselves with food of all kinds, in the evening making their oblations (or offerings), they partake of the mysteries."<sup>1</sup> Here, then, in the fourth century we have a survival of the primitive Supper, and held on the Saturday evening according to ancient tradition.

But this was an exceptional case, and almost everywhere else the Eucharist was now celebrated in the early morning, and both those who gave and those who received the sacrament must be fasting.<sup>2</sup> All

<sup>1</sup> Socrates, "Hist.," v. 22. See also Sozomen's "Hist.," vii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> "Conc. Carth.," 3, can. 29. "Ut sacramenta altaris non nisi a jejunis hominibus celebrentur, excepto uno die anniversario quo cœna Domini celebratur."

but the baptized (and a considerable proportion of the adult Christians were still unbaptized) were compelled to withdraw from the church, and the doors were guarded by the deacons;<sup>1</sup> for if a heathen or even a catechumen beheld the awful sight or heard the consecrating words the sacrament was profaned. But the baby who had been baptized that very day was introduced and had the sacrament administered to it. The priest put a crumb of bread into its mouth and moistened its lips with his finger dipped in the wine. We learn from the "Apostolic Constitutions" that when the prayers and responses were ended, the order of procedure was as follows: "After that let the bishop partake, then the presbyters, and deacons, and sub-deacons, and the readers, and the singers, and the ascetics; and then of the women, the deaconesses, and the virgins, and the widows; then the children; and then all the people in order, with reverence and godly fear, without tumult. And let the bishop give the oblation, saying, The body of Christ: and let him that receiveth say, Amen. And let the deacon take the cup, and when he gives it, say, The blood of Christ, the cup of life; and let him that drinketh say, Amen!"<sup>2</sup> The cake had not yet dwindled into a wafer, nor was the cup withheld from the laity, but they were eaten and drunk with deep awe, for was not the bread the body of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ?

<sup>1</sup> "Apostolic Constitutions," ii. 57, viii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* viii. 13.

I have previously stated that from the first the communion wine was always mixed with water. There was no symbolism in this. Wine was generally so mixed for ordinary use in Jewish households. It became symbolical afterwards. But in the third century, or even earlier, there arose a sect who rejected the wine altogether in the sacrament, and used nothing but water. It was probably as much a protest against the idea of blood as the use of wine. They were called *Hydroparastatæ*, or *Aquarians*—water-drinkers, in short. Cyprian is especially vehement against them. He argues that to offer water without wine was as bad as to offer wine without water. “In consecrating the cup of the Lord,” he says, “water alone cannot be offered, even as wine alone cannot be offered. For if any one offer wine only, the blood of Christ is dissociated from us; but if the water be alone, the people are dissociated from Christ.” Calling the Psalmist and the Holy Spirit to his aid, he appeals to the 23d Psalm, “Thine intoxicating cup, how excellent it is!” which cup, he argues, could not be a cup of non-intoxicating water.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “*Epist. ad Cæcilium*,” 62. Cyprian’s argument is founded on the Septuagint rendering of Ps. xxiii. 5. “I wonder very much,” he says, “whence has originated this practice, that contrary to evangelical and apostolical discipline water is offered in some places in the Lord’s Cup; which water, by itself, cannot express the blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit, also in the Psalms, is not silent on the sacrament of this thing when he makes mention of the Lord’s Cup, and says, ‘Thy intoxicating cup, how excellent it is!’ Now the cup which intoxicates is assuredly mingled with wine, for water cannot intoxicate anybody.”

Referring to some who objected to take wine at "the morning sacrifices" lest they should be, as he phrases it, "redolent of the blood of Christ" during the day, he exclaims, "How can we shed our blood for Christ who blush to drink the blood of Christ?"<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the denunciations of councils, bishops, and priests, this teetotal sacramentalism kept its ground for centuries; and it is now appearing again, showing that though it had slept a long sleep, it was never dead.

The belief in the transmutation of the sacramental bread and wine, first mentioned by Justin Martyr, had been steadily growing. Its growth had been helped by the prevalent belief in magic and sorcery. It had also been fostered by the fact that the heathens ate the flesh of their victims, and, in some cases, drank their blood at their sacrificial feasts. But this was human flesh and blood! and yet Christendom did not sicken at the thought. It was impossible the participants could believe it, or they would have turned away from the feast with a shudder; and yet there were millions who believed they did believe it. So little does the mind know itself! For the first three centuries the statements of the fathers are somewhat vague. They assert that the bread became the body and the wine became the blood of the Son of God, but how, they did not pretend to say; it was a mystery. But its very mysteriousness was an addi-

<sup>1</sup> "Epist. ad Cæcilium," 62.

tional recommendation to it; for all other religions had their mysteries; and without mystery no popular faith was possible. Occasionally a writer of the period stretching from the second to the sixth century, admitted that the language used by Jesus originally and by himself and others afterwards was figurative, and that the bread and wine were, after all, only signs or symbols of the bruised, and broken, and bleeding Jesus.<sup>1</sup> We need not wonder that the boldest should sometimes waver in speaking of such a subject. But the majority of writers do not seem to have suspected that there was any figure in the matter, and taught that the bread became the very body, the wine the very blood of Jesus; that the Son of Mary was corporeally present in every true sacrament and was eaten by the communicants.<sup>2</sup> It was a startling

<sup>1</sup> This is especially the case with Augustine, who certainly looked upon the bread and wine merely as symbols, notwithstanding that he occasionally used the current sacramental vocabulary of his period. See Epist. 98, ad Bonifacium; Ad Ps. iii.; "Contra Adimantum Manich.," chap. xii., etc. Tertullian is somewhat contradictory, but he has passages in which he clearly recognises the figurative meaning of Christ's words. Thus: *Panem qui ipsum corpus suum repræsentat.* "Adv. Marcion.," i. 14. See also "Adv. Marcion.," iv. 40, where he expressly declares that when Christ used the expression, *This is my body*, He meant, *This is the figure of My body*.

<sup>2</sup> Such expressions as *μεταβολή, μεταμορφοῦσθαι, μεταστοιχειῶσθαι* are quite common. Cyril of Jerusalem says, *Ὁ ἄρτος τῆς εὐχαριστίας μετὰ τὴν ἐπίκλησιν τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος οὐκέτι ἄρτος λιτὸς, ἀλλὰ σῶμα Χριστοῦ.* "Catech. Mystag.," iii. 3. (The bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is no longer mere bread, but the body of Christ.)

"Be fully assured," says the same Cyril, in his fourth "Catechetical Discourse," as quoted by Fleury (book xviii.), "that what appears to

doctrine as well as a revolting one. But the people were credulous, and familiar with miracles and magic, and believed the mystery—so far as they could.

The Supper had become a sacrament, and now it passed into a sacrifice. It was called the Sacrament of the Altar ; for the communion table had become an altar, and the presbyter had become a priest. The bread and wine still brought by the communicant to the altar were the oblation which he offered ; such was the first idea, an idea which remains in the most ancient liturgies. But as the bread and wine, after the consecration, became the very body and blood of Christ, out of the first belief there was evolved the higher one that Christ Himself was really and truly offered on the altar, a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Every time the sacrament was dispensed the sacrifice of Calvary was re-enacted and renewed. It was said to be a bloodless sacrifice ; but this must have been said

be bread is not bread, though it seems so to the taste, but the body of Christ ; and that what appears to be wine is not wine, although the taste will have it so, but the blood of Christ."

Ambrose says : "*Panis iste panis est ante verba sacramentorum ; ubi accesserit consecratio, de pane fit caro Christi.*" "*De Sacramen.,*" iv. 4. (The bread is bread before the sacramental words, when the consecration takes place the bread becomes the flesh of Christ.)

In accordance with these passages we have this prayer in the "Divine Liturgy of James" (so called) : "This, thine all Holy Spirit, send down, O Lord, upon us and upon these offered holy gifts ; that coming, by His holy and good and glorious appearing he may sanctify this bread and make it the holy body of Thy Christ." Hundreds of similar passages might be cited.



in forgetfulness that the wine was the blood of the Christian victim.

“When you approach the altar,” says St. Cyril, “do not stretch out your hands and do not spread your fingers; but put your left hand under your right that it may serve for a throne, since it is to receive this great king, and then receive the body of Christ in the hollow of your hand saying, Amen. Sanctify your eyes by touching them with the sacred body; then partake, and take heed that ye lose not any of it. If you had gold dust in your hands how cautiously would you hold it! this is much more valuable than gold or precious stones; take care, therefore, not to let fall the least crumb. After having communicated of the body of Christ, approach likewise to the cup of the blood without extending your hands; bend yourself in a posture of adoration, saying, Amen, and sanctify yourself by partaking also of the blood of Christ. Whilst your lips are still moist, touch them with your hands in order to sanctify your forehead, your eyes, and the other organs of your senses.”<sup>1</sup>

In many churches there was daily communion performed in some such way as this, and all the illuminated were exhorted to come, and by eating the consecrated bread keep vigorous the divine life within them. Founding on the text, “Except ye eat

<sup>1</sup> Cyril's fifth “Catechetical Discourse,” as quoted by Fleury, book xviii. See also Jacob's “Ecclesiastical Polity,” App. A.

the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man ye have no life in you," it was held that unless a man partook of the consecrated bread he must be lost eternally. But when a man ate of the bread he became one with Christ, and Christ was one with him. Every figure was employed to celebrate its divine virtues. It was the medicine of the soul. It was the bread of life. It was manna from heaven. "This mystery," cries Chrysostom, "turns earth into heaven. I will now show you upon earth, not angels or archangels, not the heavens or the heaven of heavens, but the Lord of them all, whom you not only see, but touch and eat, and carry home with you. By this body I am no longer earth and ashes; I am no longer a captive but free. By this I hope to receive heaven and immortality."<sup>1</sup>

When the consecrated bread was thought to possess such miraculous power, it was not only sent to the sick and the dying, it was given to the dead, as a sure *viaticum*; but this last custom appears to have been a little too much for those who had still some rays of reason; and it was forbidden by the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D., and again in the Council of Constantinople *in Trullo* in 692 A.D. But pious people kept a little store of it beside them to be used as a charm as occasion might require. And very right, for they were told that Satyrus, the brother of Ambrose, was saved from drowning by having a bit

<sup>1</sup> "Hom. 24 in 1 Cor."; Bingham, xv. 8-14.

of it tied in a handkerchief round his neck, and Acacius was cured of blindness by having a poultice of it put on his eyes.<sup>1</sup>

But there were others upon whom the awful sanctity attached to the sacrament appears to have had an opposite effect. They felt themselves unworthy to communicate, and kept away from it altogether. They were like the Highlanders of Sutherland and Ross, who stay away from the sacrament from a fear they may eat and drink unworthily. It was necessary this over-scrupulousness should be extinguished. Accordingly councils made it imperative upon all who had been baptized, and were not doing penance, to communicate.<sup>2</sup> Bishops thundered against those who still refrained. Chrysostom reasoned with them, and denounced their dangerous obstinacy, but all to no purpose.<sup>3</sup> The Church had to yield, and accommodate itself to these tender consciences. It gave them bread, consecrated with a form of words by which it was not converted into the body of Christ. It was only blessed bread. It

<sup>1</sup> Giesler, vol. ii. p. 50 ; Jacob's "Ecclesiastical Polity," App. A.

<sup>2</sup> "Apostolical Constitutions," book viii. ; Canons 9 and 10.

<sup>3</sup> Hom. 3 in Ephes. ; Hom. 3 "De Incomprehensibili." "I often observe," says the great preacher in this latter homily, "a great multitude flock together to hear the sermon, but when the time of the holy mysteries comes, I can see few or none of them. It makes me sigh from the bottom of my heart that when I, your fellow-servant, am discoursing to you, you are ready to tread on one another in your earnestness to hear ; but when Christ, our common Lord and Master, is ready to appear in the holy mysteries, the Church is empty and deserted." See Bingham, book xv. chaps. iv. and ix.

was called not “eucharistia,” but “eulogia.”<sup>1</sup> And it would appear that many preferred this counterfeit to the genuine Eucharist. It was afterwards employed in a different way. It was an old custom for one church to send a piece of sacramental bread to a neighbouring church in token of love and unity, and sometimes for friend to do the like to friend; but many thought this was profaning the body of Christ, and it was forbidden.<sup>2</sup> The “eulogia” took its place, and was sent, at sacred seasons, from friend to friend, as we now send Christmas cake or Christmas cards.<sup>3</sup>

The dark ages which were now fast approaching received this anthropophagous religion as a heritage from an age which can boast of some of the greatest luminaries the Church has ever possessed—Ambrose and Augustine, Chrysostom and Basil, and last but not least Gregory the Great, who, in his *Sacramentarium*, gave to the liturgy of the Lord's Supper the form which it has substantially preserved ever since in the Roman Church. For centuries the Church kept the doctrine as it got it. The clergy were too ignorant to move either backwards or forwards in such a matter. But the human mind cannot remain for ever at rest. Men cannot help

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, xv. 4, 3. In the earlier writers the two words meant the same thing.

<sup>2</sup> By the Council of Laodiceæ.

<sup>3</sup> Bingham, xv. 4-7. It was sometimes called in the Latin Church “panis benedictus.”

thinking, and thought peers into everything, sacred and profane. The mode in which Christ existed in the eucharistic elements had not yet been authoritatively determined. Pascasius Radbert set himself to do this, and about the year 850 published a treatise in which he maintained that, after the consecration, nothing remained of the symbols but the outward form, and that under these the body and blood of Christ were really and locally present; and further, that the body of Christ thus present was the same body which was born of the Virgin, which suffered upon the Cross, and was raised from the dead. Against this grossly materialistic doctrine Ratramnus, at the request of Charles the Bald, took up arms; but he fought with his visor down, and his own doctrine is doubtful. As a matter of course, many others joined in the fray, foremost among whom was the celebrated schoolman John Scotus Erigena, whom Strathearn, Ayr, and Ireland all claim as a son. It was in this controversy that the disputants bandied about the abusive word *stercoranism*—an ugly epithet, but certainly applicable to the orthodox side, if not also to the other. Two centuries later the famous Berengarius entered the field against the degradation of the sacrament, but he was compelled to recant once, twice, thrice, and made to subscribe to a creed in which he swore that the bread and wine on the altar, after consecration, were the very body and blood of Jesus Christ, and

as such and as objects of sense, were handled by the priests, and crunched by the teeth of the communicants.<sup>1</sup> Irrationalism could go no further; but miracles came to the help of unreason, as they so often have done, and now Jesus Himself was frequently seen, by the bodily eye, on the altar, sometimes as a little boy, and sometimes as a lamb slain;<sup>2</sup> and on one occasion, to convert a sceptical lady, the round cake she had baked and brought with her to the communion was visibly turned into flesh.<sup>3</sup> After this who could doubt? Berengarius doubted, and even renounced the creed which he had been compelled to subscribe (for he had a great facility in recanting both ways), but the universal church was against him.

The word transubstantiation was used in the twelfth century, but it was not till 1215 that the fourth Lateran Council, at the instance of Innocent III., accepted and promulgated the doctrine now known by this name as the authoritative doctrine of the Church.<sup>4</sup> It was really a more spiritual and

<sup>1</sup> Giesler, vol. ii. p. 403, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 315.

<sup>3</sup> "At the holy communion," says Fleury, "the people used then to bring their own bread, which was a small, round, flat cake. A Roman lady once receiving the communion from the hand of Gregory, and hearing him say the usual words, could not forbear smiling when he called that the body of Jesus Christ which she had made with her own hands. Paulus Diaconus adds, that the saint, perceiving her behaviour, took this bread out of her hands, and having prayed over it, showed it to her, turned into flesh before all the people." Jortin's "Remarks," vol. iii. pp. 48, 49.

<sup>4</sup> Giesler, vol. iii. p. 315; Mosheim, Cent. xiii. chap. iv.



defensible doctrine, as we shall afterwards see, than some of those which had preceded it. But that was not fully seen at the time, and, as the manner of Christ's presence was now determined beyond all controversy, a multitude of effects followed. The sacrament was no longer given to infants, for it might not be properly swallowed. The cup was withheld from the laity, for some of its contents might be spilt. The host was elevated and worshipped as God, and carried about in solemn procession.<sup>1</sup> And, finally, the great festival of *Corpus Christi* was instituted. Thomas Aquinas had devoted his philosophic genius to completing the sacramental system, and now he employed his poetic gift in celebrating the great day in the most stirring of all his hymns.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Giesler, vol. iii. pp. 317-320. The withholding the cup from the laity began in the twelfth century, but, as one might expect, it was not soon nor easily established everywhere. There are still some exceptions. "The King of France," says Dean Stanley, "always took the cup. The Bohemians extorted the use of it from the Pope. The laity in England were long conciliated by having unconsecrated wine. The Abbot of Westminster always administered it to the King and Queen at the coronation. And in the three northern churches of Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, and Norham it was given till 1515." ("Institutions," chap. iii.)

<sup>2</sup> This hymn—"Pange, lingua, gloriosi"—is counted one of the finest in the Church's collection—equal to the *Vexilla Regis* and the *Stabat Mater*. The new doctrine of the Church comes prominently out—

In supremæ nocte cœnæ,	Verbum caro panem verum
Recumbens cum fratribus,	Verbo carnem efficit,
Observata lege plene,	Fitque sanguis Christi merum,
Cibis in legalibus,	Et si sensus deficit,
Cibum turbæ duodenæ	Ad firmandum cor sincerum
Se dat suis manibus.	Sola fides sufficit.

So things remained till the Council of Trent met. Though there were violent controversies before its decrees and canons were framed, when these were framed their language was so clear and direct as to make all mysteries plain. "If any one saith that in the holy sacrament of the eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denieth the wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and the whole substance of the wine into the blood—the species only of the bread and wine remaining; which conversion the Catholic Church most aptly calls transubstantiation—let him be anathema."<sup>1</sup> In harmony with this canon, it is declared in the creed of Pius IV. "that in the most holy sacrament of the eucharist there is really, truly, and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a change effected of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, which change the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation."

Thus it is only the substance of the bread and wine which is changed; their species, their outside appearances, and properties remain precisely as before. Of course the question at once presents itself—is it possible for a thing to have all the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Canon 2.

perties of an entirely different thing ; for a horse, for instance, to have all the appearances, peculiarities, and attributes of a tree ? The Roman Catholic virtually says that this is possible, and actually happens in the sacrament of the altar, where you have human flesh with all the appearances and properties of wheaten bread and human blood, yea, a whole Christ, with all the appearances and properties of ordinary vintage wine. But when the Roman Catholic has made up his mind to this, he is safe from further attack. You say to him the consecrated bread looks like bread, tastes like bread, smells like bread, feels like bread. "That is exactly the doctrine of the Catholic Church," he replies, "as defined by the Councils of the Lateran and of Trent. We all hold most firmly that the sacramental elements are not changed in any of their sensible qualities ; it is their substance only that is changed." Within this inner fortress, which metaphysic has built for him, the Romanist is unassailable by the ordinary arguments. He laughs at all appeals to the senses, for his sacramental divinity is placed in a region beyond them ; he laughs at all appeals to reason, for philosophy, as well as faith, comes to his aid.

The species, the accidents remain, the substance only is changed. What are these species or accidents, and what this substance ? Are there such things in nature ? can such things be conceived even in thought ? It must be acknowledged it is a

very old doctrine that underlying all qualities there is a something which we call substance, and that substance and quality can be separated from one another in thought at least, if not in reality. The Greek thinkers knew the distinction: the schoolmen exercised their subtilty about it, and developed the doctrine. Locke recognises substances as being distinct from their qualities, but he acknowledges we are entirely in the dark as to what they are. Reid makes a similar confession. Hamilton discriminates two meanings of substance — the one *ens per se subsistens*; the other *id quod substat accidentibus*. In this latter meaning (which is the one we have to do with), he says, "Substance is a term for the substratum we are obliged to think to all that we variously denominate a mode, a state, a quality, an attitude, a property, an accident, a phenomenon, an appearance,"<sup>1</sup> etc. The Germans make a similar distinction when they speak of phenomena and noumena—the noumena being an utterly unknown something (or nothing), which underlies the phenomena.

Is there such a thing as substance thus defined, a thing underlying sensible qualities, and separable from them in fact, or at least in thought? I confess I cannot even think of a quality *per se*; nor of an *ens*, a thing, a substance (call it so if you please) existing, and yet existing in no mode, or shape, or

<sup>1</sup> "Lectures on Metaphysics," viii.

way. If substance and quality, as separately defined, do not come within the limits of the conceivable, much less the sensible, I must decline to believe they exist at all. I believe in matter, and that this matter exists in endless modes and ways. It may be of any size, shape, colour, odour, and, so far as my senses reach, I may know it in any or all of these modes. These modes are what are sometimes called its qualities; but they are simply the modes in which the matter exists, and are in no way distinguishable from it. If matter exists it must exist in some mode—to exist in no mode is not to exist at all; and, therefore, when we become cognisant of matter we are cognisant of it as it is, that is, in some condition or mode of being. It is the matter itself we are cognisant of in that particular state in which it then exists, not any quality or species or phenomenon separable from the matter, though existing in it. Substance and quality, in their scholastic sense, are the creatures of definitions, and have no existence in nature, nor are they conceivable in thought.<sup>1</sup>

It is upon these scholastic distinctions between substance and quality that the doctrine of transubstantiation is based. The qualities are separated from the substance, and it is held that while the qualities remain the same as before, the substance in which they inhere is entirely changed. You have the qualities of common bread and wine and the substances of

<sup>1</sup> See the author's "Theory of Knowing and Known," chap. viii.

human flesh and blood. If you grant that the distinction between substances and qualities has any foundation in the nature of things, you will find it difficult, if not impossible, to disprove the Lateran hypothesis. All philosophers are agreed that we know nothing whatever of substance; its qualities conceal it while they reveal it, and therefore the theologian is at liberty to make of it what he pleases. Deny there is any such thing as an unknown substance underlying qualities, and separable from them, and the Catholic hypothesis crumbles to dust.

Supported as the doctrine of Transubstantiation is by the Greek, the scholastic, and, to a large extent, by the modern metaphysic, it is by far the most defensible hypothesis which has ever been set up to explain the presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Supper. No other hypothesis is backed up by such a subtle philosophy; no other can so shelter itself from both reason and ridicule in the sanctuary which has been provided for it. Moreover, no other is really so spiritual as this—if the spiritual be the negation of the material. It grants that, so far as sense goes, the bread and wine remain unchanged, and that it is only in a region beyond sense, and even beyond mental comprehension, that the conversion takes place. The material and sensible have no part or lot in it; it belongs entirely to the sphere of the spiritual and unknown. It is the noumenal and not the phenomenal which is operated upon by the priestly



words ; and the noumenal not being phenomenal can never be an object of sense. All previous speculations on the subject were much more coarse and materialistic. Cyprian could speak of the breath of a man, who had taken the sacrament, as smelling of Christ's blood. The controversialists of the ninth century could charge one another with stercoranism.<sup>1</sup> Berenger was forced to subscribe a creed to the effect that the communicant chewed Jesus Christ in his mouth. Mediæval legends told of wafers which had sweated blood. The Tridentine doctor would not use such language, or at least need not. His Christ in the sacrament is removed from the region of sense to the region of the unthinkable and non-existent. The Roman Catholic's sacramental Christ is the God of Spinoza.

Luther was unable or unwilling to abandon the belief that Christ was in some way present in the sacrament, though he renounced and denounced Transubstantiation with all the vehemence of his character. He hit upon the hypothesis of Consubstantiation, though the term is not his. By this is meant that the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine, but that they are, at the same time, the flesh and

<sup>1</sup> The prayer still used by the priest in the service of the Mass, on his taking the second ablution of the cup, in other words, the rinsing of it, is almost as coarse as anything we can conceive, though intended to be antagonistic to the old reproach—"May thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and thy blood which I have drunk, *cleave to my bowels*," etc. The Tridentine doctrine, rightly understood, requires no such prayers as to the ultimate destination of the consecrated bread and wine.

blood of Christ.<sup>1</sup> This vastly increases the difficulty instead of removing it. A thing cannot be what it is and something entirely different at the same time. One cannot be two nor two one. The same thing cannot be in two different places at the same time; nor can two different things (both material) be in the same place at the same time.<sup>2</sup> The axioms of both metaphysics and mathematics are dead against the Lutheran hypothesis. Luther knew this, but he set mathematics at defiance, saying God was above mathematics. No hypothesis could be more irrational, and it remains a blot on German Protestantism. The altar, the crucifix, the candles, existing to this day in the Lutheran churches, show how unwilling Luther was to forsake the traditions of his fathers on this point.

Calvin applied his acute intellect to discover a better way—a way that would retain the presence of

<sup>1</sup> "We believe, teach, and confess that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are substantially present, and that they are truly distributed and taken together with the bread and wine." ("Form. Concord.," Art. vii., Affirm. i.)

<sup>2</sup> This argument was frequently used against consubstantiation with reference to Christ's body being confessedly in heaven. But apart from this theological difficulty, the wheaten bread and the human flesh (both material) cannot both be in the same place at the same time, which consubstantiation presupposes. The Lutheran divine, Dr. Luthardt, thus states the doctrine: "What the disciples take and eat is His body. It is not merely bread and wine. He gives them His body; in receiving and partaking of the bread they receive and partake of His body, one in and with the other. And what is true of the bread and body is true of the wine and blood of the Lord." ("The Lord's Supper—A Clerical Symposium.")

Christ in the sacrament, and yet not violate reason and sense. He also failed, though not so disastrously as Luther. It is indeed difficult to discover what his views really were; for when discussing this subject he loses his usual perspicuity and consistency, and seems to waver between a corporeal and a merely spiritual presence. "Calvin," says Kahnis, "treats with profound contempt those who connect the body and blood with the elements, while he regards it a gross misrepresentation to deny that he considers the elements to be the vehicles of the true body and blood."<sup>1</sup> He is said to have maintained the virtual presence of Christ, but what that means is not very clear.<sup>2</sup> In one place he says, "I hold that the sacred mystery of the Supper consists of two things, the corporeal signs which, presented to the eye, represent invisible things in a manner adapted to our weak capacity, and the spiritual truth, which is at once figured and exhibited by the signs."<sup>3</sup> Here is pure Zwinglianism and good

<sup>1</sup> "Die Lehre vom heil: Abendmahl," p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> "The system of Calvin," says Wilberforce, "was built upon a denial of the coherence between the *sacramentum* and the *res sacramenti*. And hence he was compelled to rest the presence of the *virtus sacramenti* upon the absolute decree of Almighty God, because he was unable to ground it upon the actual presence of our Lord's humanity. . . . So he may be said to have held only a virtual presence," p. 126. Again, "The *res sacramenti* (according to the Church system) is partaken by all, because Christ's presence depends merely on the validity of consecration; but the *virtus sacramenti* is that effect which follows from Christ's presence, when there is a living relation between him and the soul," pp. 122-23. ("Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist.")

<sup>3</sup> "Institutes of the Christian Religion," book iv. chap. xvii. (Edition of Calvin Translation Society, vol. iii. p. 399.)

sense. In another place he says, "There are some who define the eating of the flesh of Christ and the drinking of His blood to be nothing more than believing in Christ Himself. But Christ seems to me to have intended to teach something more express and more sublime. . . . For as it is not the sight but the eating of bread that gives nourishment to the body, so the soul must partake of Christ truly and thoroughly, that by his energy it may grow up into eternal life. Meanwhile we admit that there is nothing else than the eating of faith, and that no other eating can be imagined. But there is this difference between their mode of speaking and mine. According to them, to eat is merely to believe ; while I maintain that the flesh of Christ is eaten by believing."<sup>1</sup> Here is the coarsest anthropophagism, if there be only faith on the part of the communicant ! According to the Roman theory, the consecrating words of the priest convert the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ : according to Calvin, faith on the part of the communicant has this miraculous effect. And, most curious of all, the mind eats matter !

<sup>1</sup> "Institutes," book iv. chap. xvii. vol. iii. p. 393. I am aware many will maintain that Calvin did not really hold such opinions. My reply is, if he did not hold such opinions why use such words ? Why insist so strongly on the necessity of partaking of the flesh and blood ? If it be said he means a mere spiritual partaking, I reply, he himself repudiates that meaning ; and, further, the spirit cannot eat flesh and blood. If it be said his language is figurative, I answer I wish I could think so, for then he would be a Zwinglian.

“I maintain that the flesh of Christ is eaten by believing!” “I am not satisfied,” he says again, “with the view of those who, while acknowledging that we have some kind of communion with Christ, only make us partakers of the Spirit, omitting all mention of flesh and blood.”<sup>1</sup> Again, “Christ descends to us as well by the external symbol as by His Spirit, that He may truly quicken our souls by the substance of His flesh and blood. He who feels not that in these few words are many miracles is more than stupid, since nothing is more contrary to nature than to derive the spiritual and heavenly life of the soul from flesh.”<sup>2</sup> Truly a manifold, a prodigious miracle, if the bread and wine, in any conceivable or inconceivable way, become the flesh and blood of Christ, and if these material elements nourish the spiritual life of the communicants. Is there anything in the Roman doctrine worse than this—anything more destructive of rational Christianity? The communicant believes; his belief is as potent as the old priestly words; the sacramental elements become (it matters not how) the flesh and blood of Jesus of Nazareth, and eating these nourishes the Christian life!<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Book iv. chap. xvii. vol. iii. p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 417.

<sup>3</sup> In his “*De Cœna Domini*” Calvin expresses the same sentiments, perhaps still more strongly, insomuch so that Luther was inclined to claim him as his own. In the “*Consensus Tigurinus*,” drawn up with the design of uniting the Swiss churches (the Zwinglian included) in regard to the sacraments, he speaks more carefully, but still holds that the body and blood of Christ are conveyed to the believing communicant in the Supper.

O Calvin! the clear-headed, the cold-hearted, how should eating human flesh and blood in any form or way be necessary to nourish the soul? Blessed are they who do not believe, for thus they escape this horror! "We should not expect," says Bishop Ewing, "to arrive at the secret of Hamlet by eating a bit of Shakespeare's body, and so, though we ate ever so much of the material bones or flesh of the founder of the Eucharist, we should not arrive one whit nearer to 'the mind which was in Christ.'"<sup>1</sup> It is not by eating the missionary that the cannibal becomes a Christian, but by learning his lessons and copying his example.

Is this doctrine faithfully mirrored in the Westminster Shorter Catechism? It is there said that the worthy communicant, "not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, is made a partaker of Christ's body and blood to his spiritual nourishment." "By faith"—what does that mean? Does it mean that believing is partaking? That is what Calvin expressly repudiates. Does it mean that faith converts the elements in some undefined way, and that we participate in them so converted? That is what Calvin undoubtedly teaches, as we have just seen. He rejects transubstantiation, he does not accept of consubstantiation, but he holds that the flesh and blood of Christ are eaten and drunk by the believing communicant. It is well that the Scottish Christian,

<sup>1</sup> "Memoir of Bishop Ewing."



in defiance of Calvin, can accept the first alternative, and hold that the partaking is merely mental, as thus only can it escape being "corporal and carnal;" and he may at the same time lament that such words as the "partaking of Christ's body and blood" should have found a place in his Catechism at all.

The articles and offices of the Church of England are still more Calvinistic on this point than the Confession and Catechisms of the Church of Scotland."<sup>1</sup> But while modern Scotch theology tends toward Zwinglianism, the drift of English theology at this day is toward a doctrine which is really identical with Luther's. Following the phraseology of Augustine and many Roman theologians, Robert Wilberforce, when still an Anglican archdeacon, held that in the Eucharist there was always a *sacramentum* (a sign—the bread and wine) and a *res sacramenti* (a thing signified—the flesh and blood of Christ), and that these were united by the act of consecration into one compound, inseparable whole.

<sup>1</sup> The Twenty-eighth Article of the Church of England runs thus:—"To such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. . . . The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner." How we can eat a *body spiritually*, or how the *spirit* can *eat* what is *corporeal*, is very perplexing. The communion service is in strict accordance with this article. In the prayer immediately preceding the consecration the words are—"Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us."

Whosoever received the one received also the other.<sup>1</sup> This is simply consubstantiation differently expressed : the elements and the body and blood coexist. Dr. Sadler<sup>2</sup> holds that what the ancient sacrifices did for the Jewish Church the Eucharist does for the Church of Christ. The bread and cup, by the words of institution, *are so identified with the body and blood* of the Christian victim, that the sacrifice of Calvary is sacrificially presented and partaken of. In the Eucharist we eat and drink, not the food of a common feast, but of a sacrifice ; we eat not from a festive board, but from an altar. *The body and blood of Christ are present in the consecrated elements* in a mode which can only be called sacramental ; but it is a real presence of body and blood, not of mere spirit and influence. It will require a hair-splitting metaphysician to distinguish this from the Lutheran doctrine, with the sacrificial idea superadded.

Zwingli has the high honour of having been the only one of the Reformers who clearly understood the meaning of the sacrament of the supper, and had the courage to say what he thought in the face of all Europe, both Papist and Protestant.<sup>3</sup> He held that

<sup>1</sup> "Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist," chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> "The Lord's Supper—A Clerical Symposium." The papers contained in this volume first appeared in the "Homiletical Quarterly" for 1880.

<sup>3</sup> He at first hesitated to publish his opinion, so opposed was it to all the theological thinking of the time. (See Giesler, v. pp. 340, 341, and *note*.) In the honour given to Zwingli we must, of course, associate his friends Œcolampadius, Bucer, Hedio, etc.

the Supper was simply a memorial feast, held in compliance with the request of Jesus Himself, "Do this in remembrance of me." He held that the bread and wine were simply the signs or symbols of Christ's body and blood. He rose above the literalism which maintained that the words, *This is my body*, settled the whole controversy; and read them as any ordinary reader would—*This is to be regarded by you as the symbol of my body*. He thus got rid of the absurdity of supposing that at the first Supper a dual Christ was present—Christ in His proper person, and Christ in the cake which He held in His hand, and that these two were one; and that the Twelve understood all this, and uttered no word of surprise. Above all, he recognised the truth that a company of devout men and women sitting down to eat a social supper in commemoration of the heroic sacrifice of Christ were more likely to have their enthusiasm, their fortitude, their faith, their love to one another and to their divine Master, stimulated into intensity by such intercourse than by merely tasting any material substances whatever. It was in the commemoration and the brotherly communion that the power lay.

Never did Luther show worse than in his conference with Zwingli in the old castle of Marburg, where they were brought together by the Landgrave of Hesse in the vain hope of effecting a reconciliation and agreement between the two illustrious Reformers.

Luther sat down at the table, and, taking a piece of chalk, wrote upon it in large letters—HOC EST CORPUS MEUM. These were to be his battle words. “I protest,” said he, “that I differ from my adversaries with regard to the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper; and that I shall always differ from them. Christ has said, *This is my body*. Let them show me that a body is not a body. I reject reason, common sense, carnal arguments, and mathematical proofs. God is above mathematics. We have the Word of God, we must adore it and perform it.” Œcolampadius reminded him there were many figures in Scripture, as, The rock was Christ, I am the vine, etc.; and, moreover, that a corporeal eating could do no spiritual good. Luther would not listen to this. “I see it written,” he said, “eat, this is my body. We must therefore believe and do. We must do—we must do—we must do”—he exclaimed impetuously. Zwingli now interposed—“Jesus Himself has said that ‘to eat his flesh corporeally profiteth nothing,’<sup>1</sup> and hence He must have given us in the Supper a thing that was useless to us.” Luther was not moved by this, and much more that was said. “This is my body,” he reiterated, pointing to the words he had written on the table. “The devil himself shall not drive me from that. To seek to understand it is to fall away from the faith.” “What God says man

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 63.

must believe, even though God were to say that a horse-shoe was His body.”<sup>1</sup>

Never was more pitiful bibliolatry seen—worse than any Mariolatry—a worshipping of the letter to the utter neglect of the spirit. Had Luther always reasoned thus, he would never have broken the back of the Papacy, and given religious light and liberty to Christendom. The end of the conference was sadder than the beginning; for it seemed to show that Dr. Martin, spoiled by success, had lost not only his head but his heart. When all hope of agreement was at an end, “There is no one upon earth with whom I more desire to be united than with you,” said Zwingli, approaching Luther; and, as the Landgrave begged them to acknowledge each other as brothers, the brave but tender-hearted Swiss burst into tears and held out his hand. Luther refused to take the hand held out to him. “You are of a different spirit from us,” he said gruffly. The Swiss were on the point of retiring, when Luther, melting a little, and urged by the prince and his own friends, said, “We acknowledge you as friends. We do not consider you as brothers or

<sup>1</sup> As this seems on the border of the profane it is as well I should give the very words as they are found in Ebrard's “Das Dogma vom heil: Abendmahl und seine Geschichte”—“Wenn Gott etwas sage, müsse man's glauben, selbst wenn Gott sage, dass ein Hufeisen sein Leib sei” (vol. ii. p. 318). Still more coarsely Luther said—“I do not ask what is the use of this bodily eating? If God told me to eat dung I would do it.” *Ibid.* p. 320.

members of Christ's Church ; but we do not exclude you from that universal charity which we owe even to our enemies." Luther now held out his hand, and, though it was offered with insult, the Swiss warmly took it, and there was some appearance of kindly feeling all round.<sup>1</sup> A humiliating chapter in the history of the Reformation and of this anthropophagous belief.

There must be some fascination in a doctrine which, in one form or another, held all Christendom in thrall for twelve hundred years, and which is still an article of faith in the Eastern as well as the Western Church, and a source of consolation in life and death to so many millions of Christians. It is no doubt flattering to the priest that he can create his own Creator ; that he can, by whispering a few words, convert a wafer into a god ; and carry about with him any number of gods in his waistcoat pocket. It is not wonderful he should try to believe this—though it seems incredible and unthinkable. But why should Cyprian, Cyril, Chrysostom, Ambrose have believed it ? why should Luther have so obstinately clung to it ? why should Calvin have been unable to get rid of it ? why should Bishop Fisher and so many others have been willing to die for it ? why should myriads of highly-cultivated, refined, and sensitive men and women at this moment put all their hopes for time and eternity on it, and that though it seems to fly in the face

<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigne's "Hist.," vol. v. pp. 100-120 ; Ebrard, vol. ii.



of culture, refinement, and human sensitiveness? This is indeed a mystery.

On the other hand, no other religious tenet has driven so many thoughtful men from the Church, and turned devotion into mockery. The mockers are to be found among the pious as well as the profane. Regarding the tenet as below the reach of reason, they attack it with ridicule. The *hocus pocus* of the juggler is known to be the whispered *hoc est corpus* of the priest. What exquisite satire there is in that philological fact! But let us listen to John Knox mocking at the belief he so hated and despised:—"I have said the poor god of bread is the most miserable of all other idols, for according to that matter whereof they are made, they will remain without corruption for many years; but within one year that god will putrefy, and then he must be burnt. They can abide the inclemency of the wind, frost, or snow; but the wind will blow that god to the sea; the rain or snow will make it dough again; yea, which is most of all to be feared, that god is a prey, if he be not well kept, to rats and mice, for they will desire no better dinner than white round gods enow. But, oh! what then becometh of Christ's natural body? By miracle it flies to heaven again, if the Papists teach truly; for so soon soever as the mouse takes hold, so soon flieth Christ away, and lets her gnaw the bread. A bold, puissant mouse!—but a feeble and miserable

god!" "If any think," continues the Reformer, "that I ought not to mock that which the world hath so long holden, and great princes yet hold in so great veneration, I answer that not only I, but also all the godly, ought not only to mock, but also to curse and detest, whatsoever is not god, and yet usurpeth the name, power, and honour of God."<sup>1</sup>

The mass holds the place of the Lord's Supper in the Roman Catholic Church. After ceasing to be a supper, it had been developing in the missal direction from the institution of the *Missa Fidelium* in the ante-Nicene Church. It reached its full efflorescence in the Tridentine mass. The belief in the conversion, in some way or other, of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ was the germ-principle out of which all the other developments sprang; and hence the service of the mass is simply an unfolding of this root idea. When the priest has spoken the consecrating, the transubstantiating, the omnipotent words, not addressing them to the people, but whispering them softly to the wafers and the wine,<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Reasoning betwixt the Abbot of Crossraguell and John Knox. See Knox's Works.

<sup>2</sup> In the Roman Church there is no consecration prayer, as in the Greek Church. The words of the Institution—This is my body, this is my blood—effect the consecration. They are creative words, addressed to the elements, and are spoken in a whisper, lest the people should hear them, and by repeating them over bread and wine, in their ordinary meals, convert them into the sacred mysteries. Bunsen (ii. 50) tells a legend of some shepherds who had unwittingly done this and were struck dead.

they have had their creative effect, he elevates his wafer divinity, and the people go down upon their knees and worship it. He next immolates his wafer—or shall we say his Christ?—and offers it to the Father as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. The sacrifice being ended, the feast on the sacrifice begins. He swallows his wafer—Christ, which he had first worshipped and then immolated, and he drinks the wine, which is also Christ in a liquid form. In the great majority of masses, high and low, the feast ends here—the priest has supped alone—for, saving at Christmas and Easter, the people seldom communicate. When they do communicate they go up to the altar rail and kneel there, and obey as they best can the instruction—“Let your head be erect, your mouth opened moderately wide, and your tongue a little forward, so as to rest upon your under lip, that the priest may conveniently convey the blessed sacrament into your mouth. Let the sacred host moisten a little upon your tongue, and then swallow it down as you can, and afterwards abstain awhile from spitting,”<sup>1</sup>—in case, of course, you should spit out Christ.

Is this the Lord's Supper? Is this the representation of the scene in the upper chamber at Jerusalem eighteen hundred and fifty years ago? We see no supper; no festive company; no commemorative cakes and bowls of wine. What we do

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Challoner's directions in “The Garden of the Soul,” p. 251.

see is a man in parti-coloured clothing, inside a rail, acting what appears to be a pantomime. Sometimes he is on his knees and sometimes on his feet; he bows, in dumb show, toward the altar; he turns this way and that way; at one moment his face is toward you, and the next his back; and occasionally he mumbles something in a language which no one understands;—is that the Lord's Supper? the friendly breaking of bread, as in Apostolic days? Yes, that is what is held to be the Lord's Supper in the Church which calls itself Catholic and Apostolic, and which has within its fold more than two-thirds of all the Christians in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Let us enter an Episcopal church with no special ritualism. The people devoutly go up to the altar rail, and “meekly kneeling” there, receive a crumb of bread and a sip of wine from the officiating minister, with the words, “The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.” When the cup is given similar words are said. And having thus, one by one, received the sacrament, the communicants quietly retire. Is this the Lord's

<sup>1</sup> To get this numerical result I add the Greek to the Roman Church, as their doctrines of the sacrament are not very different. Of Roman Catholics there are said to be 200,315,000, and of Greek Christians 77,958,000; that is, when taken together, 278,273,000. The Protestants do not count more than 120,000,000.

Supper in its original form ? Certainly more like it than the other, but as certainly it is not the supper of the first days.

Let us enter a Presbyterian church. A table is spread, bread and wine are placed upon it, the minister gives thanks for them ; they are circulated round the table or are carried by the elders to the communicants, who merely taste them. The minister speaks shortly of Christ's life and death while they are communicating, and then they retire.<sup>1</sup> Is this the Lord's Supper as it was first instituted by the Lord Himself ? Certainly much liker than either of the others, but still different—so different as to be scarcely recognisable. There are the table and the company of disciples seated around it ; there are the bread and wine ; the commemoration and the communion ; but it is not a supper in any true sense ; it is merely an imitation of one, like the few drops of water sprinkled on the face of the child instead of the bath in baptism. So here there is the morsel of bread and

<sup>1</sup> I describe the Lord's Supper as it is still dispensed in the majority of Scotch Presbyterian churches, and as it was till quite recently in them all. Simultaneous communion is now becoming common, as it is found to be convenient. In such cases the communicants occupy the pews in a part of the church devoted for the day to that purpose (generally the nave), and the elements are carried to them by the elders and passed from hand to hand. The minister sits at a table, on which the bread and wine are placed, facing the communicants. When the elders are not engaged distributing the elements, they sit beside him on his right hand and his left. The effect is not so scenic as in the old style, when there was a table specially spread, but the scene still represents a great company at supper.

the drop of wine, but there is no friendly talk as there was on the first night and for a hundred years afterwards ; no such festive spirit as pervaded the Paschal supper and the Christian supper too ; but a silence as deep as death, an awe probably quite as great as that felt by Anglican, or Roman, or Greek, when kneeling at the altar and receiving what he is told is the Lord's Body and Blood.

It must be told there is no Church in the world in which the Lord's Supper is eaten as it was in the apostolic or sub-apostolic days. What shall we say then ? That the Lord's Supper, as instituted, no longer exists ?

There is nothing about which there have been more curious speculations than about identity. When does a thing lose its identity, or can it ever do so ? In the letters of the Freethinkers to Martinus Scriblerus we read of how "Sir John Cutler had a pair of black worsted stockings, which his maid darned so often with silk that they became at last a pair of silk stockings." Did they preserve their identity during all this process of darning, or, if not, at what point did they lose it ? The man of sixty is entirely different from the boy of six of whom he is come ; there is not one atom of matter in the body of the one which was in the body of the other ; there is not one thought or feeling in common between them ; and yet there is what is called, truly or falsely, personal identity. The sacrament of the Supper has



changed as much as Sir John Cutler's stockings or as the man of threescore years from what he once was. Has it lost its identity? Is it no longer the Lord's Supper? In strict truth, as I think, there is no such thing as identity with anything for two days together—there is only continuity. Everything in the world is perpetually changing—everything is in a state of flux—everything is growing or decaying,—what was is not, and what is shall not be. It is with creeds and with institutions as with everything else. What they were yesterday they are not to-day. What they were in the first century they cannot possibly be in the nineteenth. But amid all this change there may be continuity of existence, linking the thing of to-day with the thing of two or three thousand years ago. In the case of the child and the man, with such vast change as to destroy all possibility of recognition, there is undoubted continuity of existence. You may advance even further than that and say that the one is the other, only developed and matured. Is it so with the sacrament of the Supper? There is undoubted continuity of existence between that sacrament as it is now in all the Churches, Greek, Roman, and Reformed, and as it was in the Church of the primitive Christians. There may be but a slender thread of connection, but it is an unbroken thread. With the greatest certainty the Popish Mass, as well as the Episcopal Eucharist and the Presbyterian Supper, can be traced back, step by step, till

they reach their origin in the first Supper at Jerusalem.

In such a historical retrospect we find the social meal which, at first, was the chief characteristic, if not the very essence, of the institution disappearing, as festive eating and drinking in a large and mixed community had sometimes ended in rioting and excess. But the bread and the wine-cup were still retained, though invested with awful mystery. Development followed development, and the homely supper of the upper chamber became the greatest and most miraculous institution of the Church. The true supper had become extinct, because it had not a pure atmosphere, and it was only in a pure atmosphere it could live. But the sacramental Eucharist, in all its developments, survived, for it was adapted, or rather it had adapted itself, to the times. No religion but one of miracle, magic, and mystery could have survived the mediæval ignorance and superstition. Beyond all controversy the Mass, as it now is, could not be recognised as the supper eaten by Christ and His disciples. But neither can the man be recognised as the quondam child, and yet he is that child, only grown, matured, perhaps decayed. I have said there is continuity of existence in both cases, and perhaps more than this is not to be looked for. The beautiful child sometimes becomes the blotched and battered old man. The innocent youth sometimes becomes the drunkard and the rake.

Cardinal Newman, in his interesting "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," acknowledges that there have been enormous evolution and expansion of the Church's ritual and creed. The whole truth, he says, was revealed at first, but it has taken all these centuries to discover its meaning and its scope, and it will take centuries more to discover all. Truths once sown germinate, and grow, and ripen, and bear other truths. It may be difficult to believe that the whole service of the Mass and the ideas involved in it were all revealed in the simple narrative of the institution of the Supper, and that it took fifteen hundred years of study before they unfolded themselves to the mind of Christendom; but that is what the Romanist must maintain, and in fact does maintain.

Dr. Newman, however, admits that there may be corruptions as well as developments of ritual and doctrine. He foresaw that what he described as developments might be regarded by others as corruptions, even as he looks upon many religious beliefs as corruptions, which others venerate as true developments of original Christianity. He therefore devotes his fifth chapter to contrasting what he considers genuine developments of the Christian faith with corruptions of it—not expansions of the original idea, but departures from it. He accordingly gives several notes or marks by which a genuine development may be known, and the first, and by far the most

important, of these is—Preservation of Type. The genuine development preserves the original type.

Type is rather a loose word, and scientific men are beginning to doubt if there be such a thing. Developments diverge so widely from their originals and from one another that it is often difficult to say what is their type. The butterfly is a genuine development of the chrysalis and the caterpillar; where is their type to be found? The fish and the fowl are said to be descended from a common ancestor—which has preserved the type? or is there a type at all?

But leaving this out of view, let us take Cardinal Newman on his own ground and inquire where he finds the type of a supper—of a friendly social meal—in the Mass? A supper, if it implies anything, implies eating and drinking and social talk. In most masses there is neither eating nor drinking nor talk. In some the priest puts a thin wafer on the projecting tongue of the kneeling communicant, and tells him it is his God. It is difficult to recognise a typical supper in that. Shall we say, then, that the Mass is a genuine development or a corruption?

No doubt the same objection may be urged, to some extent, against both the Episcopal and the Presbyterian celebrations. Neither of them reproduces the original scene—neither of them are pure developments of the original idea, though historical continuations of the first institution. The Anglican Church allowed too much that was Roman to remain in its

constitution ; the Scottish Church honestly endeavoured to revert to the primitive type, and to some extent did so. But it failed to do so fully. It was impossible. What was practicable with twelve or twenty or a hundred was impossible when there were millions. Before the "Agapai" were abolished they had lost the spirit of the Lord's Supper, though they had retained its form. It was better the form should be abandoned if thereby the spirit was retained.

In all churches, with their widely-varying forms of celebration, there are still bread and wine and a commemoration of Christ's death and passion ; and so the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, the Mass—call it what you will—is a monument, more durable than granite, of the original institution and of the love which inspired and preserved it.<sup>1</sup> Whether there is identity and genuine development or not, there has at least been unbroken continuity of existence ; and thus every time we eat the Sacred Supper we are in contact and communion with Christ and His disciples, and with all the saintly men and women who have partaken of it in the intervening centuries.

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Muir, in his tract, "The Lord's Supper an Abiding Witness to the Death of Christ," urges this argument, but he weakens it, to some extent, by making it depend so much on the antiquity of liturgies. The Gospels, with their account of the Lord's Supper, are admitted on all hands to be older than the oldest liturgies.

## LECTURE VI.

### SUNDAY AND ITS NON-SACRAMENTAL SERVICES.

I PURPOSE devoting this lecture to the Sunday and its non-sacramental services.

The Jews, like the Egyptians and most eastern nations, divided their moons into four periods of seven days each, and kept each seventh day as a day of rest. The Creator worked six days and rested on the seventh, and so should His creature man. Such was the tradition and the commandment founded on it. Rest was the only idea involved in the ancient Hebrew Sabbath. It was the resting-day, the Sabbath. "Thou shalt do no manner of work therein." Its design was therefore wholly beneficent—to lighten men's burdens, to free the slave from his taskmaster on one day out of every seven. In after times, when synagogues were erected in every village and town, the people were gathered into these every Sabbath to have the law and the prophets read to them, and thus a portion of their leisure



time was profitably employed, and at the same time the idea of religion was grafted on the primary idea of rest. Still, rest was the main idea. And it was to this conception of the day the Jews clung with the greatest tenacity. Some of the Mosaic legislation in regard to the Sabbath rest, when read literally, appears to be ridiculous from its minuteness and savage from its cruelty; but its spirit and purpose was to surround the day with a fence which could not be easily broken down, and preserve from any infringement the labourer's rest. The very release which it gave from work made it a festival day—a day of joy and gladness to all the people, more especially to “the labourer and the heavy laden.”

In after times the rabbis, to show their wit or their wisdom, put fanciful and fantastic meanings on the original legislation, which made it, in some cases, oppressive when it was designed to be beneficent. Thus taking the text, “Abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day,”<sup>1</sup> they interpreted it as meaning that every man should remain immovable on the spot where he was when the Sabbath day came. If he was sitting, he must sit still; if he was lying, he must lie still till the Sabbath was gone.<sup>2</sup> Another school of rabbis

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xvi. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Alii, ex quibus Dositheus Samaritanus . . . ridiculosius aliquid statuunt, quia unusquisque quo habitu, quo loco, qua positione in die Sabbati fuerit inventus, ita usque vesperam debeat permanere, id est, vel si sedens, ut sedeat tota die, vel si, jacens, ut tota die jaceat.

of a more generous disposition, unwilling to chain the whole population to one spot for four-and-twenty hours, maintained that every man's place was the space of two thousand cubits round about him, and that if he did not go beyond that he did not move from his place.<sup>1</sup> The one interpretation was as ridiculous as the other. The stricter rabbis held that to walk on the Sabbath with shoes in which there were nails was to carry a burden and violate the law; while the laxer ones maintained that, while it was undoubtedly a contravention of the law to carry a burden on one shoulder, it was no contravention to carry a burden on each shoulder, for the one was, as it were, the equation of the other, and so cancelled it.<sup>2</sup> Such conceits, though counted grave theological questions then, only provoke laughter now; but when we read of a thousand brave Maccabees allowing themselves to be massacred rather than seize a sword and fight for their lives on the Sabbath day, we can only deplore that fanaticism should have gone so far as to pervert

Origen, "De Principiis," lib. iv. chap. i. He repeats the same thing in his "Philocalia," chap. i.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* The two thousand cubits was the Sabbath day's journey.

<sup>2</sup> Ad fabulas devoluti sunt Judæorum doctores, dicentes, non reputari onus, si calceamenta quis habeat sine clavis, onus vero esse, si quis caligulas cum clavis habuerit. Et si quidam super unum humerum aliquid portaverit, onus judicant, si vero supra utrumque, negabunt esse onus. (*Ibid.*) Some of the distinctions made by modern Sabbatarians are quite as ridiculous, though they do not see it.

a day designed for man's good into a day of slaughter.<sup>1</sup>

But the most rigid Jews, those who would not lift a stick or kindle a fire or snuff a candle on the Sabbath, regarded it as a festival, and to be kept in a festive manner. It was not only allowable, but as far as possible imperative upon them, to have their festivities on the Sabbath. On that day they dined their friends. On that day they gave their dances.<sup>2</sup> On that day their homes must be more bright and cheerful than on other days. Very beautiful is the legend of the Sabbath eve. "When man leaves the synagogue for his home, an angel of good and an angel of evil accompany him. If he finds the table spread in his house, the Sabbath lamps lighted, and his wife and children in festive garments, ready to bless the holy day of rest, then the good angel says, 'May the next Sabbath and all thy Sabbaths be like this. Peace unto this dwelling, peace!' and the angel of evil is forced to say 'Amen.' But if the house is not ready, if no preparations have been

<sup>1</sup> 1 Maccabees, chap. ii. From the same cause Jerusalem fell into the hands of Pompey. Josephus, "Bell. Jud.," i. 7, 8.

Senesius, Epist. iv., quoted by Bingham, book xx. chap. ii., tells a story of a Jewish pilot who, during a terrible storm, stood staunchly at his helm till sunset brought the Sabbath, and then left it, as it was unlawful to work on the Sabbath.

The Essenes were particularly strict in their Sabbath-keeping, as we learn from Josephus, "Bell. Jud.," ii. 8, 9.

All the Roman satirists—Juvenal, Martial, etc.—have their jests at the Jewish Sabbath-keeping.

<sup>2</sup> Among other authorities, Philo, "De Therapeutis," tells us this.

made to greet the Sabbath, if no heart within the dwelling has sung, 'Come, my beloved, to meet the bride; the presence of the Sabbath let us receive,' then the angel of evil speaks and says, 'May all thy Sabbaths be like to this,' and the weeping angel of goodness responds, 'Amen.'"<sup>1</sup>

Josephus tells us the seventh day was set apart from labour and dedicated to the learning of the national customs and laws;<sup>2</sup> and no doubt with many it was so, and so far it was blessed; but the early Christians upbraid the Jews with giving themselves over to idleness, or to banqueting and indecent gaiety. "Let us no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner," says the pseudo-Ignatius, "and rejoice in days of idleness; not in eating things prepared the day before, nor using lukewarm drinks,

<sup>1</sup> Polano's "Selections from the Talmud," pp. 280, 281. We have also the following illustration of Jewish Sabbatical ideas:—Rabbi Achiya, the son of Abah, said, "I sojourned once in Ludik, and was entertained by a certain wealthy man on the Sabbath day. The table was spread with a sumptuous repast, and the dishes were of silver and gold. Before making a blessing over the meal the master said, 'Unto the Lord belongeth the earth and all that it contains.' After the blessing he said, 'The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath He given to the children of men.' I said to my host, 'I trust you will excuse me, my dear sir, if I take the liberty of asking you how you have merited this prosperity?' He answered, 'I was formerly a butcher, and I always selected the finest cattle to be killed on the Sabbath, in order that the people might have the best meat on that day. To this, I believe firmly, I owe my prosperity.' I replied, 'Blessed be the Lord that He hath given you all this.'" Pp. 279, 280.

<sup>2</sup> "Antiquities," xvi. 2, 3; "Contra Apion," ii. 18.

and walking within a prescribed space, nor finding delights in dancing and plaudits, which have no sense in them.”<sup>1</sup> “Our rest,” says Augustine, contrasting the Christians and the Jews, “is from evil works, their rest is from good works; for it is better to plough than to dance.”<sup>2</sup> And again, “A Jew would do better to work in his field at some useful labour than spend his time at the theatre in a seditious manner. And their women had much better spin on the Sabbath than spend the whole day on their new moons in immodest dancing.”<sup>3</sup> This “sitting down to eat and drink and rising up to play” is said to have been the origin of the reproachful proverbial phrase *luxus sabbatarius*. It is probable, however, that the growing asceticism may have led Austin, Ruffinus, Chrysostom, Cyril, Theodoret, and Christians generally to be more condemnatory of the Sabbath festivities than they need have been; but it is beyond all question that the Jews did spend a part of their Sabbaths in amusements and entertainments which, it is to be hoped, were generally innocent.

It is certain that Jesus of Nazareth never censured His countrymen for the way in which they kept the Sabbath, for He was not an ascetic.

<sup>1</sup> “Ad Magnes,” chap. ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Vacatio nostra a malis operibus, vacatio illorum a bonis operibus. Melius est enim arare quam saltare.* In Psalm xci.

<sup>3</sup> “Idem, De decem Chordis,” chap. iii.

Ruffinus, on Hosea ii. 11, “I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths,” describes and denounces the indecencies of the Sabbath.

He came eating and drinking, and understood the Sabbath law. The Sabbath was to be a day of rest and joy and gladness ; a day on which the very beasts of burden, loosed from the yoke, were to find repose in their stalls or rich pasture fields ; a day on which the synagogue doors were open, and all who chose might spend a pleasant hour in discussing some knotty point in the law or the prophets. But, on the other hand, Jesus rebelled against those glosses and traditions which had destroyed the spirit of the Sabbath, and had made it hang about some necks like a millstone, instead of being a solace and a relief. On the Sabbath day He healed the sick ; He walked through the cornfields with His disciples, plucking the ears of corn as He went ;<sup>1</sup> and He bade the paralytic, whom He had cured, to take up the mat on which he had been lying and carry it home with him,<sup>2</sup> thus encouraging him to violate the letter of the law, but certainly not its spirit. He was accordingly regarded by all the stricter Sabbatarians of His day as a Sabbath-breaker. His striking apology was, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."<sup>3</sup> The day was designed

<sup>1</sup> Plucking the ears of corn and rubbing out the grains, interpreted as threshing, would be regarded by the strict Jews as the main offence, as threshing was one of the kinds of work specifically prohibited. So far was this notion carried by some Jews that they interdicted walking on the grass on Sabbath, as thereby one might thresh out or tread out the grass seeds.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. ix. 6 ; John v. 8-16.

<sup>3</sup> Mark ii. 27.



for man's happiness, and therefore only so far as it promoted man's happiness was it binding. It was never intended that man's happiness or interest should be sacrificed to any mere seventh day observance. A noble sentiment, showing how deep an insight Jesus had into the heart of religion.

Jesus gave no hint as to whether He wished the Sabbath to be kept in the coming kingdom of God. Nor did He give any hint as to whether He wished any other day to be kept as a religious festival. He had said to the woman of Samaria that in the time to come no place would be more holy than another; from which we may infer that no day would be more holy than another: the converse of which is that all places would be equally holy, all days equally sacred: and that the Great Spirit might be worshipped on any day, in any place, provided He were worshipped in spirit and truth.

On Friday Christ was crucified and carried to His burial in the new sepulchre hewn out of the rock, on the same day, before the sun went down. The next day was the paschal Sabbath. "And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun was risen. And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed.

And he saith unto them, Be not amazed : Ye seek Jesus the Nazarene, which hath been crucified : he is risen.”<sup>1</sup> Christ was risen ! so say Mark and all the evangelists ; and from the moment of that announcement the first day was sacred to the Christians.

There is ground for thinking that from that time onward the Christians held their meetings on the first day of the week. “ Upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them.”<sup>2</sup> So writes the historian of the Apostles. He speaks of such meetings as being customary. “ Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.”<sup>3</sup> So writes Paul to the Corinthians. But what is the exact time indicated by the first day of the week ? It was in the evening they met ; for their main business was to eat together their evening meal or supper—to “ break bread ” as the phrase is.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, in the notice of Paul’s preaching at Troas, we are told “ there were many lights in the upper chamber where they were gathered together,” and that “ Paul prolonged his speech until midnight.” Now ; we know that the Jews reckoned their days from sunset to sunset. The evening and the morning (not, as with us, the morning and the evening) con-

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 1, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xx. 7.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

<sup>4</sup> The Fast Day was therefore sometimes called by Chrysostom the *Dies Panis*, the bread day, as the passover among the Jews was sometimes called the days of Unleavened Bread.

stituted the day. When, therefore, the sun went down on the seventh day (say at six o'clock), the Sabbath was at an end; the first day begun. If, therefore, the Christians met in the evening of the first day, according to the Jewish reckoning, that indicates the evening of the seventh day, or Saturday, according to our reckoning. Beyond doubt that was their meeting time. There was a certain propriety as well as convenience in such an arrangement; and we may still look upon the Saturday evening with veneration as the link between the Sabbath and the Sunday.<sup>1</sup> The Jewish Christians would be present in their synagogues during the day—some of them discussing with their fellow-countrymen whether Jesus was the Christ; and when the evening was come, and darkness had set in, they would meet in one of their houses, made bright and clean for the occasion, in such festive garments as their poverty would admit, and there they would eat, with mingled mourning and mirth, their social meal, and continue their devotions and their talk, their memories of the past and their hopes of the future, under the dimly-burning lamps, far on into the night, sometimes till near the dawn of the day. Next morning they would be at their work again, for having rested from all their work on the seventh day they could not rest on the first day too. These circumstances, as much

<sup>1</sup> Almost up to our time the Saturday evening, "the Sunday Eve" has had a certain sanctity attached to it. So with Christmas Eve.

as the dread of detection and persecution, explain their night meetings. What would we not give for a glimpse of one of these lamp-lit, midnight meetings at Jerusalem or Antioch or Corinth!

The next notice which we have of the Christian holiday is in the Epistle of Barnabas—a document nearly as old as the Acts of the Apostles, though not the production of Paul's Cypriot companion. "We keep the eighth day with joyfulness," says he, "the day on which Jesus rose from the dead."<sup>1</sup> Yes, no doubt it was kept with joyfulness, for it commemorated a joyful event; and besides the Sabbath had always been a festive day. "We devote Sunday to gladness,"<sup>2</sup> wrote Tertullian a hundred years afterwards in the same strain.

In Pliny's well-known letter we are told the Christians met on a "stated day" before it was light, and again they met later on to take an innocent meal together. There can be little doubt the "stated day" was our Saturday. They met in the morning, it being the Jewish Sabbath, for instruction and worship, after the manner of the synagogue; and they met again in the evening, it being now the first day of the week, to eat the Lord's Supper. In the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" the Christians are instructed to assemble on the Lord's Day in order to

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xv. He says the "eighth day," as being the day after the seventh. We would say the first day.

<sup>2</sup> "Apologeticus," chap. xvi.

break bread and give thanks, after confessing their sins.<sup>1</sup> In all probability that was still the evening of our Saturday. But by far the most interesting notice of the primitive Sunday and its services is to be found in Justin's "First Apology."<sup>2</sup> We have already referred to it more than once, but we must now quote it at length.

"On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, in like manner, offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do and willing give what each thinks fit, and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning amongst us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need."

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. lxvii.

Here we have a very graphic picture, though simply drawn, of a first day assembly, probably in Rome, about the middle of the second century. There are the reading of the Scriptures, the address of the president, the prayers, the sacred supper, the almsgiving. How like to the first day assemblies of the present time ! The worship of the Church was beginning to emerge from its primitive chaos as witnessed at Corinth, and it was not yet overgrown with the tropical superstitions and ceremonies of the succeeding centuries.

But what of the Sabbath during the hundred years and more over which we have travelled ? There can be no doubt that among the Jewish converts it was observed very much as it had been before. Even the Apostles did not foresee that the rupture between Judaism and Christianity was to be so great as it became. They continued to worship in the temple, they frequented the synagogue, they rested from all their work on the Sabbath. The rigid Jewish Christians, called Ebbionites, who seem to have inherited the traditions of Peter, insisted on circumcision and Sabbath-keeping as parts of Christianity. Many of the Greek and Latin converts meekly accepted a Christianity mingled with Judaism, as it was difficult in those days to separate them—it is found difficult even in our own. But it is clear that most of the Greeks rebelled against Sabbatarianism as much as against circumcision ; and it was therefore Paul



insisted upon mutual toleration in regard to the matter. "Let no man," he says, writing to the Colossians, "judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath day."<sup>1</sup> "One man," he writes to the Romans, "esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind."<sup>2</sup> In his Epistle to the Galatians he lets it be seen that his sympathies were with those who did not observe the Sabbath, and speaks scornfully of those who did. "Now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."<sup>3</sup> No doubt the Galatian churches were made up of mixed nationalities, but it must have been to the Greeks and Syrians mainly Paul thus addressed himself, showing that he, Jew though he was, had risen to a higher conception of religion than to suppose that any one day could be more holy than another, or that a Jewish festival could be binding on the Christian churches.

Be that as it may, not many were so tolerant as Paul, and the Sabbath was observed, as fast or as festival, in the Western as well as the Eastern

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 16.<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiv. 5.<sup>3</sup> Gal. iv. 9-11.

Church for several centuries, though not with Jewish rigidity. "Let us no longer keep the Sabbath," writes the pseudo-Ignatius, probably about the middle of the second century, "after the Jewish manner, rejoicing in days of idleness . . . let every one of you keep the Sabbath after a spiritual manner, rejoicing in meditation on the law. . . . After the observance of the Sabbath, let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all the days."<sup>1</sup> "The Sabbath and the Lord's day ye shall observe as festivals," says the author of the "Apostolic Constitutions."<sup>2</sup> "Let the slaves work five days ; but on the Sabbath day and the Lord's day let them have leisure to go to church for instruction in piety."<sup>3</sup>

It is impossible to believe that the Christians, who were now becoming numerous, could cease from all work on two days out of every seven, not to speak of other festivals. It is still more difficult to believe that heathen masters would indulge their Christian slaves to such an extent. Tertullian advises Christian women not to marry heathen husbands, as most probably they would not allow them to rise from bed on Sunday Eve to go to the midnight meetings.<sup>4</sup> If jealousy did not operate with masters, greed would, and prevent this waste of time. But in such cases there can always be contrivance and accommodation to

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Magnes.* ix.

<sup>2</sup> "Apost. Const.," vii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* viii. 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Ad Uxorem*, ii. 4.

circumstances. Some would be at liberty to rest if they chose, and others would not. Tertullian advises Christians to postpone business till the Sunday was over; but it is impossible to say how far his advice was followed.<sup>1</sup> We know that the Christian meetings were still held at night, and it is probable that many of the Greek converts worked hard both on the seventh day and the first, and yet managed to be present at the evening meetings and the sacred meals. The "Constitutions" only ask that slaves should have leisure to go to church. The Jews, with their national tenacity, would, generally speaking, rather die than work on the seventh day; and we know that for this and other causes the Hebrew slave brought a small price in the slave-market. But the Gentile Christian had no such rigid rule to guide him. So things continued—different customs prevailing in different places, and no hard-and-fast line laid down—till the time of Constantine. But all this time, while the Greek and Latin Christians were prodigiously increasing, the Jewish element in the Church was dying out, and no longer exercising the influence it once did. There was, therefore, no longer the same need for conciliation and compromise. In the year 321 Constantine issued his celebrated edict in regard to Sunday observance: "On the venerable

<sup>1</sup> Sicut accepimus solo die dominicæ resurrectionis . . . anxietatis habitu et officio cavere debemus, differentes etiam negotia, ne quem diabolo locum demus. "De Orat.," chap. xxiii.

day of the sun let all magistrates and people in towns rest, and let all workshops be shut. But in the country, persons engaged in agriculture may, without let or hindrance, go on with their work, since it often happens that on another day the seed cannot be so fitly sown nor the vines so fitly planted, and that thus the bounty of heaven might be lost by neglect of the proper moment.”<sup>1</sup>

It was thus more than three hundred years after the birth of Christ before the first day of the week, now generally called Sunday, was made by law a day of rest; but of a rest which did not extend to the rural districts of the empire. No doubt long before this many of the Christians had made it, as far as possible, a day of repose; for, though there was no apostolic rule to compel them to do so or even suggest it, they would naturally transfer to the first day the rest of the seventh as being the more sacred of the two. But society as it then existed, with

<sup>1</sup> Omnes judices urbanæque plebes, et cunctarum artium officia venerabili die Solis quiescant. Ruri tamen positi agrorum culturæ libere licenterque inserviant: quoniam frequenter evenit, ut non aptius alio die frumenta sulcis, aut vineæ scrobibus mandentur, ne occasione momenti pereat commoditas cœlesti provisione concessa. Cod. Justin., iii. tom. xii. lib. iii. See also “Hessey on the Sunday,” Lecture iii.; Jortin’s “Remarks on Ecclesiastical History,” vol. ii. p. 133; and Giesler, vol. i. p. 262.

According to ancient custom, agricultural labourers might go on with their work on festival days, and Constantine probably had this in view. See Verg. Georg. I. 268.

When stricter views prevailed, he was much blamed for his laxity on this point; and councils and bishops strove to put an end to rural labour.

masters and multitudes of slaves liable to death for disobedience, civilians and soldiers, heathens and Christians, all forming the same web, and all working with and for one another, would prevent the possibility of such a rest being general. But now the heathens and the Jews in the towns were to be forced to rest as well as the Christians; for if the one rested, so must all, that the social and political machine might go smoothly.

It is known that Constantine, on to the end of his life, had a profound veneration for the Sun-God. He had seen him in vision presenting to him laurel crowns.<sup>1</sup> Flatterers had told him he was himself like the god, inasmuch as he was young, joyful, a bringer of salvation, and beautiful above all others.<sup>2</sup> In acknowledgment of his homage, he inscribed on his coinage *Soli Invicto*. In dedicating Sunday to rest, he would therefore gratify at once his heathen and his Christian leanings; he would please his pagan subjects, who were worshippers of Mithras or Apollo, and were, above all things, fond of holidays; and he would please his Christian subjects, who would recognise in the decree the victory of their principles and the imperial recognition of their sacred festive day. Whatever his motive, pagan or Christian, he is justly entitled to be regarded as a second Moses, for he has

<sup>1</sup> Umenius in his panegyric tells us this. See Giesler, vol. i. p. 199, *note*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Quum tu sis, ut ille, juvenis et lætus, et salutifer et pulcherrimus imperator.

given repose on one day out of every seven to a vastly greater number of the human family than ever did the Jewish legislator; and all generations of toiling men and women throughout Christendom may well rise up and call him blessed. After his death the heathen Senate gave him an apotheosis, and numbered him with the gods; and the Greek Church hailed him as "Isapostolos" — the equal of the apostles.

After this we may be sure that any respect which had hitherto been paid to the Jewish Sabbath by the Christians would decline. The Sunday would take its place as a day of rest, just as in the struggle for existence the more vigorous grass drives out the weaker growing by its side. From the first the Greek and Latin Christians had shown their preference for the Lord's Day, as it was sometimes called. Some of them, like Justin Martyr, poured contempt on Sabbath-keeping, and doubted the salvability of those who put their faith in it.<sup>1</sup> Still the

<sup>1</sup> The following are some of the utterances of Justin in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew:—"We do not observe Sabbaths as you do" (chap. x.) "God enjoined you to keep the Sabbath on account of your unrighteousness and that of your fathers" (chap. xxi.) "Do you see that the elements are not idle and keep no Sabbaths?" (chap. xxiii.) "Think it not strange that we drink hot water on the Sabbaths, since God directs the government of the universe on that day as well as others" (chap. xxix.) In the 47th chapter, Trypho having asked Justin if he thought those who were circumcised and kept the Sabbath would be saved, Justin replies—"In my opinion such an one will be saved if he does not strive in every way to persuade other men." Then, referring to others who thought differently, he says—"These do



Sabbath lingered on,<sup>1</sup> being regarded as a festival in the Eastern Church and a fast in the Western.<sup>2</sup> At length the Council of Laodiceæ, about the year 363, ordained that Christians should not follow Jewish ways and idle away the Sabbath, but should work on that day and honour the Lord's Day by resting on it in a Christian fashion.<sup>3</sup> Thus this ecclesiastical council completed the work of Constantine; he commanded the Sunday rest, it forbade the Sabbath rest, and henceforward, by an ordinance both of the Church and the State, Sunday was observed as the weekly festival of the Christians. Thus did eternal law, of which emperors and councils are only the

not venture to have any intercourse with or to extend hospitality to such persons." And again—"I believe that those who have been persuaded by them to observe the legal dispensation along with their confession of God in Christ shall probably be saved."

<sup>1</sup> Major Harris mentions a Christian Church in the highlands of Ethiopia where they still keep the seventh day and the first in the same manner and with equal strictness. Grant, in his "Nestorians, or Lost Tribes," notices the more than Jewish rigour with which the Nestorians keep the Sabbath. See Baden Powell's "Christianity without Judaism," p. 160 and Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> The original cause of the Sabbath being observed as a Fast in the West is not certainly known. The gnostic Marcion and his followers fasted on the Sabbath to show their contempt for the god of the Jews—the "demiourgos," or world-maker—whom they conceived to be infinitely inferior to the true God who was far exalted above mere world-manufacturing.

<sup>3</sup> "Ὅτι οὐ δεῖ Χριστιανοὺς Ἰουδαΐζειν, καὶ ἐν τῷ Σαββάτῳ σχολάζειν, ἀλλὰ ἐργάζεσθαι ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ, τὴν δὲ κυριακὴν προτιμῶντες, εἴγε δύναιντο, σχολάζειν ὡς Χριστιανοί· εἰ δὲ εὐρεθεῖεν Ἰουδαῖοι, ἔστωσαν ἀνάθεμα παρὰ Χριστοῦ." The precise meaning of this canon has been much disputed. I hope I have given it correctly, in a general way at least, in the text. See Hessey, Lecture iii.

ministers, working through centuries, substitute the Christian for the Jewish festival.

It is always difficult, however, to abolish an old custom; and accordingly, long after the Council of Laodiceæ, we find both the seventh day and the first observed, in Constantinople at any rate, as festivals, though not necessarily as days on which all business was suspended. "As often," says Socrates, speaking of the rivalries of the Arians and the Orthodox in the year 401, "as the festal days occurred—that is to say, the Sabbath and the Lord's Day of each week, on which assemblies are usually held in the churches—they (the Arians) congregated within the city gates, about the public piazzas, and sang responsive verses adapted to the Arian heresy. This they did during the greater part of the night."<sup>1</sup> Thus it would appear it was during the night they had these religious meetings and processions, and this would not seriously interfere with their work and business during the day.

From other sources we learn that the nocturnal meetings of the first period, when the seventh was the Jewish day of rest, had merged into morning meetings, when the first day had become the Christian rest.<sup>2</sup> The explanation is easy. The Jews counted

<sup>1</sup> "Ecclesiastical History," book vi. chap. viii.—The Arians were not allowed at this time to have churches within the walls of Constantinople.

<sup>2</sup> "The primitive morning service," says Bingham, "in times of persecution especially, was no other but the conclusion of the vigils

their days from sunset to sunset, the Greeks from sunrise to sunrise, and this alone would compel the change, if the Greek Christians were to meet, not on the seventh, but on the first day of the week, according to the reckoning of their countrymen. The Sunday did not begin till sunrise. It is probable also that it was in this way and from this cause that the translation of the supper from the evening to the morning took place. There was a convenience in the Jewish and Judaised Christians meeting on the evening of Saturday for the fraternal meal, so long as the Sabbath only was observed; there was a greater convenience in meeting for the Eucharist on the Sunday morning, when the Sunday was becoming the Christian festival, and the Sabbath was less and less attended to. But thus the supper became a breakfast, as it was always taken fasting. Bishop Lightfoot throws the change back to the time of Trajan and Pliny, or earlier, and thinks that when the night meetings of the Christians were interdicted by imperial edict the Agapé was separated from the Eucharist as non-essential, and the Eucharist transferred to the morning meetings.<sup>1</sup> But there is really no proof of this; on the contrary, there is proof that the Agapé and the Eucharist were identical for long afterwards, and were still kept in the evening.<sup>2</sup>

or antelucan or nocturnal service, which concluded toward break of day (book xiii. chap. x. § 10). See also chap. ix. §§ 4 and 10.

<sup>1</sup> "Apostolic Fathers," vol. ii. pp. 52, 386.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 219 and *note*, also p. 225.

In the Thebaïd, down to the fourth century, the Eucharist was celebrated on Saturday night—a strong proof that Saturday night was the meeting time of the early Christians, their First Day of the Week.

Gradually more rigorous notions as to resting from all work on the Sunday grew up. They sprang from the old Sabbatarianism, which, though buried, was not dead. Christianity was born of Judaism, and it could not but inherit some of its character. It had sucked in the law and the prophets as its mother's milk. Moses was placed by the side of Christ. Thus the old mingles with the new. Attendance at church was insisted upon as a special Sunday duty. Preachers inveighed against the neglect of this duty, and councils threatened with excommunication those who absented themselves for three successive Sundays. But this duty done, a rigid observance of the day was not insisted on. Jerome narrates that when the pious Paula returned from church she and her companions employed themselves in dressmaking. Worse than this, though the Christians had at first censured the Jews for the manner in which they spent their Sabbaths in dancing and theatre-going, they now began to imitate them. A Council of Carthage (A.D. 401) laments the passion which the people were exhibiting for theatrical entertainments on Sunday. It was the temptation which the holiday always brings with it—the

holy day becoming the holiday. The temptation and the tendency still exist. Down to this day theatre-going and dancing on Sunday are common in every Popish country and in some Protestant ones, and now there is no council to make lamentation over it. Even in Scotland, after the Reformation, the General Assembly had enough to do to put a stop to Robin Hood and other plays on Sunday, which were the great delight of the people after the church services were over. The Council of Orleans (A.D. 538) observes a happy medium on the Sunday question. It declares that it is Jewish superstition not to ride or walk or do anything to adorn the house or person on Sunday, but that all work in the fields should be avoided, that people might attend church and give themselves to prayer.<sup>1</sup>

When a day is set apart for rest and religion by any authority, civil or ecclesiastical, it soon acquires for itself a sacred character. People think it is in itself more holy than other days, just as a building set apart for worship is thought more sacred than other buildings, altogether apart from the bishop's consecration. The Sacramental Fast Days in Scotland were regarded by multitudes of people, and are regarded by a few still, as having an inherent sanctity; and to work or be amused on them was a deadly sin. So the Sunday gathered to itself a high sanctity in

<sup>1</sup> Schaff's "Hist.," vol. ii. pp. 382, 383; Hefele's "Concilien-geschichte."

the superstitious centuries which were approaching. Constantine had restricted the compulsory rest to the towns, and considerately allowed the farmers and vine-dressers to do as they pleased; but the Emperor Leo Philosophus in 910 A.D. rebuked the laxity of his predecessor, and enforced the rest upon all without regard to town or country, and without consideration of propitious or unpropitious days. Charlemagne in the West distinguished himself as a champion of the Sunday rest by imposing penalties for its transgression. Popes and bishops and councils exhibited a Sabbatarianism almost as gross as was ever exhibited by Scotch or English Puritan. But the rigour was in the prohibition of all servile work, and, so far, it was good. Finding no express authority for the day in the sayings of Christ or the writings of His Apostles, they fell back upon the Fourth Commandment, and made the obligations of the seventh day applicable to the first. By thus identifying the two days they to some extent abolished the Lord's Day and reintroduced the Jewish Sabbath. Some, however, were clear-sighted enough to see that the two days were essentially different, not only in their origin, but in the ideas they involved.<sup>1</sup>

The Reformers, with one voice, cried out against this Judaising of the Sunday. They recognised the need of a sacred day for sacred things, but maintained

<sup>1</sup> Hessey's "Bampton Lectures," pp. 116-126.



that no day could have an inherent sanctity. The Church might appoint for this purpose any day it pleased, but upon the whole it had done well in appointing the first day. "If anywhere," says Luther in his "Table Talk," "the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, if any one sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty." Calvin declared that the Sabbath was abrogated, that it was in no way binding upon Christians, and even proposed that Thursday, instead of Sunday, should be observed as the Lord's Day, as being the day on which the Lord's Supper was instituted.<sup>1</sup> In the "Helvetic Confession" these views of the Reformation Church are admirably expressed. "We see that in the churches of old, from the very

<sup>1</sup> See "Institutes," book ii. chap. viii. Calvin speaks thus—"The Sabbath being abrogated, there is still room among us to assemble on stated days for the hearing of the word, the breaking of the mystical bread, and public prayer; and to give our servants and labourers relaxation from labour" (sect. 32). "It being expedient to overthrow superstition the Jewish holiday was abolished; and, as a thing necessary to retain decency, order, and peace in the Church, another day was appointed for that purpose" (sect. 33). "It was not, however, without reason that the early Christians substituted what we call the Lord's Day for the Sabbath. . . . I do not cling so to the number seven as to bring the Church under bondage to it, nor do I condemn other churches for holding their meetings on other solemn days" (sect. 34). There is a well-known tradition of Knox having found Calvin engaged in a game of bowls when he visited him one Sunday. I do not know the authority on which it rests, but it is in accordance with his opinions.

times of the Apostles, not merely were certain days in each week appointed for religious assemblies, but the Lord's Day itself was consecrated to that purpose, and to holy rest. This practice our churches retain for worship's sake and for charity's sake. But we do not thereby give countenance to Judaic observance or to superstition. We do not believe either that one day is more sacred than another, or that mere rest is in itself pleasing to God. We keep a Lord's Day, not a Sabbath day, by an unconstrained observance."<sup>1</sup> How wofully have some of the Reformation churches declined from these noble Reformation sentiments by introducing a Jewish Sabbath without the Jewish joyfulness!

Such are the phases through which the Sunday has passed. Restricted at first to a few hours on Saturday night, gradually taking possession of next day, when the Eucharist was celebrated in the early morning, and the "Agapai" were held in the evening,

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with this we find Bucer saying, "To think that working on the Lord's Day is itself a sin is a superstition and a denying of the grace of Christ." Chemnitz, Beza, and other continental Reformers speak in the same strain. Among the English Reformers we find Tyndal, to whom we owe so much, saying, "As for the Sabbath we are lords over it, and may yet change it into Monday or into any other day as we see need, or may make every tenth day a holy day only if we see cause why. Neither was there any cause to change it from the Saturday, but to put a difference between us and the Jews. Neither need we any holiday at all if the people might be taught without it." ("Answer to Sir Thomas More," p. 287.) See also Heylin's "History of the Sabbath;" Baden Powell's "Christianity without Judaism;" and Hessey's "Bampton Lectures."

as was the case in the time of Cyprian ; but not till the time of Constantine commanding the whole day for rest and religion. The current of events, divinely guided, was tending in this direction from the first ; but in such matters so much depends on a single commanding mind that, had it not been for the intervention of the half-Pagan, half-Christian Constantine, it is hard to say in what form the Sunday would have come down to us. "Perhaps the Greeks would be still involved in the heresy of the Monophysites," says Gibbon, "if the emperor's horse had not fortunately stumbled. Theodosius expired ; his orthodox sister succeeded to the throne." But the Divine Ruler orders the birth and death of individuals as well as the great cycles of human events.

In the first notice we have of the Christians' meetings on the first day of the week we are told they met to eat their social supper, and to hear Paul preach. These were no doubt the two main purposes for which they usually met. But we learn from other sources that at these meetings they had prayers and hymns. I have already investigated the origin, character, and changeful history of the supper : I have also devoted a lecture to the teaching and preaching of the apostles, bishops, and presbyters ; and now I wish to say something regarding the prayers and hymns of the Church, from the beginning onwards.

Here the question presents itself, Had the Apo

stolic Churches a liturgy?<sup>1</sup> Were their prayers common prayers? or were they the outpourings of the pious enthusiasm of the moment? In considering these questions it must be remembered the Christian churches were modelled after the Jewish synagogues, and in these synagogues the service was liturgical. It must further be remembered that Jesus gave to His disciples a form of prayer. But, bearing all this in mind, it is impossible to believe that the prayers in the first churches were liturgical in any sense of the word. We may take the Church at Corinth as typical of all the Pauline Churches. In it there was perfect freedom for any one to propose a psalm, or a doctrine, or to speak in any language intelligible or unintelligible. Some prayed in unknown tongues, so that their neighbours did not know when to say Amen. Several would be speaking at once. Yet Paul does not suggest a liturgy for the cure of these evils. He does not whisper a word about common prayer. He says

<sup>1</sup> Λειτουργία, a public service or ministry. It occurs twice in the New Testament. In Luke i. 23, When the days of His ministry were fulfilled (αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ); and in Hebrews viii. 6, Now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry (νυνὶ δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτευχε λειτουργίας). Some modern writers confine the term liturgy to the service of the Eucharist or the Mass, but ancient writers generally applied it to the whole Church service. Thus Augustine divides the whole liturgy or service of the Church into five parts, viz. psalmody, reading of the Scriptures, preaching, the prayers of the bishop, and the bidding prayers of the deacons. ("Epist.," 119, ad Januar., chap. 18. See Bingham, xiii. 5, 7). The Latins from an early period used the word "missa," to designate what the Greeks meant by λειτουργία, and hence missal and mass.

very little even to check the great out-gush of spiritual gifts, real or supposed. He only begs that not more than one should speak at a time, remarking that God was not a God of confusion, but of peace.<sup>1</sup>

We must come to the same conclusion if we look to Justin's account of the meetings of Christians about the middle of the second century. The president, he says, offered up prayers and thanksgivings *as he best could*.<sup>2</sup> That is not the language which would be used if he read the prayers from a prescribed Form. Toward the end of the century Tertullian, in his impassioned way, tells us how the African Christians prayed. "Thither"—that is, to heaven—he says, "we lift our eyes, with hands outstretched, because free from sin; with head uncovered, because we have nothing to be ashamed of; finally, without a monitor, because it is from the heart we pray."<sup>3</sup> The whole description of the scene here given—the upturned eyes, the outstretched hands, even more than the statement that the prayers came from the heart without the help of a prompter, show that no prayer-book was yet used in these North African meetings. In

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv.

<sup>2</sup> Εὐχὰς καὶ εὐχαριστίας, ὅση δύναμις αὐτῷ, ἀναπέμπει. Bingham argues that this may mean spiritual ardour or intensity of devotion, but the phrase will not bear that meaning without straining it away from its ordinary usage.

<sup>3</sup> "Illuc suspicientes Christiani manibus expansis, quia innocuis; capite nudo, quia non erubescimus; denique sine monitore quia de pectore oramus." "Apology," 30. This is still the posture of prayer in the East.

truth, forms of worship are incompatible with great religious excitement, and the white molten heat of the first Christian days had not yet cooled down.

The "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," however, may lead us to modify our opinion as to the worship in some of the churches. In the instructions regarding the Eucharist, we have a short form of thanksgiving, both for the wine-cup and the cake, resembling those used at the passover-feast, and a longer prayer after the communicants had eaten and were satisfied; but to this there is attached the significant note, "Let the prophets give thanks at what length they please."<sup>1</sup> The prophets were still believed to be God-gifted men, and no constraint must be put on their ecstatic rhapsodies. Taking both these things together, and with them the notices of Justin and Tertullian, it is probable we see here the first beginnings of a liturgical service in conjunction with free prayer. We may believe the Lord's Prayer would be frequently recited in the Christian meetings from the very first. We may further believe that some of the synagogue prayers—the Shemoneh Esreh, as they were called—would sometimes be recited too.<sup>2</sup> They were all very short, and no doubt many of the devout Jews had them by heart. In prayer these old forms would

<sup>1</sup> Chap. x. *Τοῖς δὲ προφήταις ἐπιτρέπε εὐχαριστεῖν ὅσα θελοῦσιν.*

<sup>2</sup> Prideaux's "Connection," vol. ii. pp. 501-506 (book vi.) ; Horne's "Introduction," vol. iii. pp. 272-275. For the prayers used in the Temple, see Lightfoot's "Temple Service" (chap. ix. sect. 4).



recur to them in spite of themselves ; as passages from well-known litanies and collects intrude themselves unbidden into Presbyterian prayers. But neither the Lord's Prayer nor the Shemoneh Esreh would express all the feelings of the Christians—their new faith, hopes, desires, expectations. Nor could their gushing devotion be confined within such narrow bounds. They must give vent to their emotions in sounds of some kind, articulate or inarticulate, probably in most cases mainly ejaculatory and interjectional, as happens still with excitable people in excited religious gatherings. Thus, without any authoritative forms, both modes of worship, the liturgical and the free, would find a place at these meetings ; nor would the one be felt to be inconsistent with the other. As the first fervour died away the extemporised prayers would decrease, and an increasing tendency would set in toward forms of prayer, written or unwritten. Silent, private prayers continued long after liturgies came into universal use.

But what of those liturgies still in existence which claim for themselves so great an antiquity ? What of the liturgies of St. James and St. Mark, which are thought by some to be the veritable productions of the Apostle and the Evangelist whose names they bear ?<sup>1</sup> The liturgists who believe this have a faith which has proved itself able to remove mountains of

<sup>1</sup> Thus Baronius, Bellarmine, and others have endeavoured to prove that the liturgy of St. James was actually the production of the

difficulty. There is not one shred of evidence for the belief. There is not even a shred of evidence for the belief that these liturgies were framed according to traditions handed down to the Churches of Jerusalem and Alexandria from their putative first bishops. On the contrary, these liturgies, in their whole tone and style of thought, are as opposed as they well could be to the epistle of the Lord's brother and to the gospel of Paul's friend. They contain words and doctrines which were never heard of till the fourth century. And, beside all this, they are never alluded to by any writer previous to the fourth or fifth century, when they apparently existed in their simplest form.

Liturgies are devotional growths, and it is possible to trace their origin and gradual development. The prayers, or portions of the prayers, of eminent bishops and presbyters would be remembered and revered in the Church, and occasionally used by others, after they were dead. They would be committed to writ-Apostle. Grancolasius, Asseman, and others hold that the main structure of it may be referred to St. James. Cave, Basnage, Dupin, Tillemont, etc., reject its claims to so great an antiquity. Similarly divergent opinions have been held regarding St. Mark's liturgy. Mr. Neale, in his general introduction to the "History of the Holy Eastern Church," argues that both liturgies in their chief characteristics go back to the second century. Mr. Palmer, in his "Origines Liturgicæ," is not so positive as to the precise dates, but he is inclined to claim for both a very great antiquity.

Le Brun contends that no liturgy was written till the fifth century. From this we must except the rudimentary liturgy of the Didaché and its expansion in the seventh book of the "Constitutions," but it is very doubtful if that expansion, as we have it now, could have existed even in the fifth century, to such a pitch was interpolation carried.

ing. Other prayers, which originated in a similar manner, would be added to them, and when this was done there was an embryo liturgy. Hymns, responses, and rubrics required only to be added to make the liturgy complete. And where there was a clergy who could do no more than read—who could hardly be expected to pray, as was the case in the fifth century—liturgies would come into use as most helpful auxiliaries. These liturgies would, of course, change with the change of times, and would thus be continually receiving accretions. Every addition to the creed would find its way into the prayer-book, for the people must pray according to their beliefs. Every new rite added to the service must be inserted in the service-book. We see this process of growth when we place side by side the simple prayers of the *Didaché* and their expansions in the “Apostolical Constitutions.”<sup>1</sup> We see it when we compare the comparatively meagre liturgy of Chrysostom, as found in a manuscript of the eleventh century, with the swollen version of the same liturgy as found in a

<sup>1</sup> The expansions of chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 of the *Didaché* will be found in chapters 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30 of the seventh book of the “Constitutions.” In some sentences the words are the same; the changes in the words generally indicate changes in the religious sentiments of the time. Thus the word *ἐμπλῆσθῆναι*, referring to the communicants eating till they were filled, is changed into *μεταληψιν*, which gets rid of an idea which would be abhorrent to the Christians of the fourth or fifth century. For the same reason the description of the second century apostles is omitted. There could be no finer illustration of ecclesiastical development than is to be seen in a comparison of these two treatises—about a century intervening between them.

manuscript of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, of course, the natural growth would be retarded by special circumstances, as in the case of Neo-Cæsarea, where Basil tells us the liturgy had been preserved unchanged since the time of its famous bishop, Gregory Thaumaturgus, out of veneration for his memory.<sup>2</sup> It was accordingly regarded by Basil as antiquated and behind the time.

In every case, whether the prayer was liturgical or extemporised, the person stood while he prayed. This was in accordance with the customs of the Jews in their synagogues. But on Sunday, according to some of the Fathers, standing also symbolised the rising up or resurrection of Christ. The council of Nice specially decrees that prayer be offered to God in a standing posture, and rebukes those who, on Sunday and at Pentecost, bowed the knee.<sup>3</sup> The Council of Constantinople in Trullo (692 A.D.) still more explicitly ordained, "From Saturday evening to Sunday evening let no one bow the knee," and this rule is still observed in the Roman Church, except in the adoration and reception of the sacraments.<sup>4</sup> Almost all the Protestant Churches have diverged from the primitive usage—the Church of Scotland only recently.

But what of the "psalms and hymns and spiritual

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Swainson's "Greek Liturgies."

<sup>2</sup> "Epist.," 63.

<sup>3</sup> Canon xx. See Hefele.

<sup>4</sup> Schaff's "Hist.," vol. ii. pp. 382, 383. Hefele, "Concilien-geschichte."

songs" which were sung by the primitive Christians at their meetings?

"What is it, then, brethren?" says Paul to the Corinthians, "when ye come together each one hath a psalm."<sup>1</sup> What does he mean by this? Does he mean that every one of the brethren had one of the old Hebrew hymns to suggest as applicable to their circumstances, or that the Christian spirit was already bursting out in song, and that some of the converts had brought original compositions to the meeting which they wished to have sung? We cannot decide this question dogmatically, but considering that the Apostle is here endeavouring to check the too great liberty of prophesying—the spontaneity, the individualism of such meetings, it is not unlikely it was to the latter he referred. Strong feeling, especially when coloured by imagination, is always ready to find a vent for itself in song. I am confirmed in this opinion by the fact that Tertullian expressly declares that at the love-feasts in his day, when the communion was ended and the lights were brought in, every one was encouraged to sing either something out of Scripture or some song of his own composition.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the practice novel, for we learn from Philo that the Therapeutæ were accustomed to sing original

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

<sup>2</sup> "Apology," cap. xxxix. Apparently the council of Laodicæa required to put some restrictions upon this practice, for one of its canons (the 59th) is against private psalms (*ἰδιοτικοὺς ψαλμοὺς*). The probability is that many of them were idiotic.

hymns, I suppose in the manner of the Improvisatori, in their religious assemblies.<sup>1</sup> In curious confirmation of this, Lieutenant Conder, in his "Tent Work in Palestine," describing a feast of the modern Samaritans at Gerizim, says—"On the following day rejoicings continue, fish, rice, and eggs are eaten, and hymns, generally impromptu, are sung."<sup>2</sup>

The Canonical Psalms were, from the very first, sung by the Christians. They had sung them in their temple and synagogues, and now they continued to sing them in their churches.<sup>3</sup> This helped to keep alive Judaism in the heart of Christianity; but, in truth, the Psalms are wonderfully free from ceremonialism. They are the hymns of natural religion; the exaltation of all that was immutable and eternal in Hebrew piety. But naturally the Christians took from the gospels the hymns which were to be found there—the Gloria in Excelsis Deo, the Nunc Dimittis, the Hosanna, etc.—and sang them in their assemblies. They would sing ten or twelve psalms and hymns at one meeting. Unfortunately, some of their finest hymns were afterwards mixed up with theological controversy, and even with civil tumult and bloodshed. This was the case both with the

<sup>1</sup> "De Vita Contemplativa."

<sup>2</sup> Vol. i. p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> The morning service was generally begun with the 63d Psalm. The 51st (the penitential psalm) and the 90th were also frequently sung. The evening service was generally begun with the 141st Psalm. The 25th Psalm ("Sursum Corda") was the introductory psalm of the Eucharistic service.



“Gloria Patri,” and still more so with the famous “Trisagion.”

The “Trisagion” is taken from the song of the Seraphim in “Isaiah’s Vision.” Its original form was, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory, who art blessed for ever, Amen.* This is the form in which the hymn occurs in the “Apostolic Constitutions”<sup>1</sup> and in the “Homilies” of Chrysostom,<sup>2</sup> and is almost identical with the words of Isaiah.<sup>3</sup> But hymns, like everything else, are subject to the law of change, and as we descend in history, we find it assuming the developed form—*Holy God, holy Mighty One, holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.* The orthodox Fathers had discovered the doctrine of the Trinity in the three “holys”: they thought it a waste of words to apply three identical adjectives to one person, and so they invented a substantive for each adjective, or rather, analysed the one Lord God of Hosts into three—God, the Mighty One, and the Immortal One.<sup>4</sup> It was thought necessary that a miracle should ratify the change, and so a servant-boy of Proclus, Bishop of Constantinople, was taken up to heaven in vision, and distinctly heard the angels sing the hymn in the orthodox words.<sup>5</sup> After this there was no room for

<sup>1</sup> “Const.,” viii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Hom. i., De Verb. Esai.; Hom. in Seraphim, etc. etc.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah vi. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Bingham, xiv. 2, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Tillemont, “Mem. Eccles.,” tom. xiv. pp. 713-799.

doubt, and so the new edition of the hymn was adopted by all the choirs, and it is so sung in the Roman Catholic Church down to this day.

The next development was not so successful. When the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies were raging, it occurred to the Monophysite bishop of Antioch that if he inserted into the popular "Trisagion" the words—"Who was crucified for us," the people would sing it, and soon come to believe it. The Emperor Anastasius favoured this project for advancing the Monophysite cause; but this rash meddling with such a fine point of divinity nearly cost him his throne and his life. The "Trisagion," as now sung by the Monophysites, was—*Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.* The advocates of the two natures declared that this was tantamount to saying that the whole Trinity was crucified. The rival versions of the hymn were therefore sung by rival choirs, under the auspices of the opposing bishops. Violent tumults broke out in Constantinople, and the Emperor was glad to save himself by a public and humiliating retraction in the Circus, and by giving up some of his ministers to the lions.

Gibbon has described these scenes with his usual flowing eloquence and only half-concealed sneers, and though his picture is perhaps a little high-coloured, it is upon the whole true to the facts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Decline and Fall," chap. xlvii.

Every age produced its own hymns, and these always reflected less or more clearly the piety of the time in which they were produced. The *Te Deum* was once supposed to be the composition of St. Ambrose ; but it is now believed that the Gallican Church of the sixth century has the honour of it. The *Quicunque Vult* was also a hymn of Gallic or Spanish origin, though it was ignorantly received into the liturgies of many churches as the Creed of St. Athanasius. In the famous *Vexilla Regis Prodeunt*, we see reflected the cross-worship and relic-worship of the time, and in the equally celebrated *Pange, lingua, gloriosi*, we have the poetry of the repulsive doctrine of Transubstantiation, and of the *Corpus Christi* Festival.

The influence of the hymns in the first period of the Church's history was increased by the manner of singing them, and by the fact that all joined in doing so. "The chanting," says Renan, in his "Apôtres," "with which they accompanied the new hymn, was probably that species of sobbing without distinct notes which is still the chant of the Greek Church, of the Marionites, and of the Eastern Christians in general. It is not so much a musical modulation as a manner of forcing the voice, and of emitting through the nose a sort of groaning, in which all the inflexions follow each other with rapidity. They perform this extraordinary Melopœia standing, with fixed eyes, knitted forehead, and contracted eyebrows, using an

appearance of effort. The word Amen, above all, is uttered in a tremulous voice with bodily shaking. This word was of great importance in the liturgy."<sup>1</sup> Though such a musical performance might not gain the applause of the art critic, it was no doubt well fitted to rouse the enthusiasm of the performers. But the Church had no sooner taken music into her service than she began to improve it. After the manner of the Synagogue, the Christians frequently divided themselves into two companies, and sang their hymns in alternate verses—in antiphones, as it was called. Pliny seems to refer to this when he says that the Christians in Bithynia sang alternately among themselves a hymn to Christ as a God—*Car-menque Christo quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem*. Socrates and Sozomen both refer to the same practice when describing the rival processional hymns of the Arians and the Orthodox.<sup>2</sup> Socrates goes further, and tells us that St. Ignatius in vision heard angels singing hymns to the Trinity in this way, and that this led him to introduce the angelic custom in his church, from which it was copied by the other churches of the East.<sup>3</sup>

Time brought its musical developments, and, as a matter of course, the conservative spirit rebelled against these. Thus we find Chrysostom and other fathers complaining that too many refinements were

<sup>1</sup> Les Apôtres, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates, 286 ; "Eccles. Hist.," vi. 8, quoted above, p. 286.   <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

being made in ecclesiastical music, and that the artifices of the theatre were being brought into the Church.<sup>1</sup> There was now occasionally choir-singing and solo-singing. In due season the Gregorian chant was introduced. About the tenth century organs came into use. And after centuries more the monotonous chanting of the primitive Nazarenes developed into the masses of Mozart and the oratorios of Handel. But probably never was mass or oratorio sung by a cathedral choir in the nineteenth century amid more religious enthusiasm than were the rude chants of the first-century Christians at their midnight meetings in some squalid chamber in some poor quarter of Jerusalem, Antioch, or Rome.

In the most ancient Churches there was no regular order of worship. Everything was chaotic. But even chaos tends to order by an inevitable law. In the second century, as we may see from the "Apology"

<sup>1</sup> The language of St. Chrysostom would more than satisfy those who in our day object to organs and choir-singing. "Oh, unhappy wretch!" he exclaims, "thou oughtest with reverence and fear to send up the angelical hymn, and with trembling to make confession to God, and thereby ask pardon of thy offences. Instead of this, thou bringest into the Church the manners of mimics and dancers, by a disorderly tossing up of thy hands, and beating with thy feet, and agitations of thy whole body. . . . Thy mind is blinded by what thou hast heard and seen in the theatres, and the things which are done there thou bringest into the rites and ceremonies of the Church. . . . These are more the practices of strumpets on the highway or actors in the theatre. And how darest thou to mingle the sports of devils with that doxology whereby angels glorify God?" Hom. i., De Verbis Esai.; also Hom. xix., in Matt. See also Hieron., in Ephes. v.; Austin, "Confess.," book x. chap. xxxiii.; Bingham, xiii. viii. 11; xiv. i. 18, 19.

of Justin and the "Teaching of the Apostles," there were the beginnings of a regular order in the worship of the Churches. By the next century the system of catechumenism, already explained,<sup>1</sup> had grown up. An awful mystery had, at the same time, surrounded the sacraments. The heathens, the unbaptized, might not witness the celebration : holy things for the holy. This led to the division of the Church service into two parts—the *Missa Catechumenorum* and the *Missa Fidelium*. The former comprehended the psalms, the Scripture lessons, the sermon, and such prayers as were made for the catechumens, and, in some cases, for the penitents and energumens, or those who were supposed to be possessed by devils. When this was ended, the heathens, energumens, penitents, and catechumens were dismissed, and the *Missa Fidelium*, or Communion Service, was begun. This comprehended certain introductory prayers for the faithful, and mankind in general, and then—1. The Kiss of Peace ; 2. The form beginning, "Lift up your Hearts ;" 3. The hymn, "Therefore with Angels," etc. ; 4. Commemoration of the Words of Institution ; 5. The Oblation ; 6. Prayer of Consecration ; 7. Prayers for the Church on Earth ; 8. Prayers for the Dead ; 9. The Lord's Prayer ; 10. Breaking of Bread ; 11. Communion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Lecture III. above.

<sup>2</sup> Trollope, quoted in the Introductory Notice to Clark's Edition of "Ante-Nicene Liturgies."

Neal, in his "General Introduction," enumerates six devotional



At first every bishop ordered the details of this service according to his pleasure. Thus different liturgies dating from different churches took their rise and came into use. All these have been grouped in four families—The Liturgy of the Jerusalem Church, in general use throughout the East; the Liturgy of the Alexandrian Church, used in Egypt; and the Roman and Gallican Liturgies, which divided between them the Latin Church. It is beyond my plan to trace the origin and growth of these liturgies farther than I have already done. I may only say that there is nothing in ecclesiastical literature more illustrative of growth. They grew with the growth of religious opinion. In most cases it is difficult to determine their original form and date, they have been so overlaid with the additions of succeeding centuries. They are like some of our old churches, in which you can trace the masonry of every style from the Norman, or even the Roman, downwards. It may be only a round-arched door or window; but there it is, giving its testimony to an antiquity of seven hundred years; and perhaps a little piece of wall of curious workmanship, exciting the suspicion that the Christian Church had been built on the foundation of a pagan temple.

acts as constituting the Mass of the Catechumens; five as constituting the Mass of the Faithful; and the Anaphora he divides into four parts—The Great Eucharistic Prayer; The Consecration; The Great Intercessory Prayer; The Communion—these four embracing twenty devotional acts.

The development of the sacramental element in the liturgy gradually crushed out almost everything else. Sacramentalism is unfriendly to sermonism, and hence, after the fifth century, preaching declined. When men were saved by the sacraments, *ex opere operato*, there was no occasion for their being religiously educated. When the darkness of the mediæval centuries deepened, the priests became almost as ignorant as their parishioners; for their office only required that they should be able to read, perchance with stammering tongue, their missal and their breviary. But people must know something of the religion they professed, and hence, as I have previously remarked, pictures representative of Bible scenes were introduced into the churches—Madonnas and Magdalenes, Crucifixions and Ascensions, the Adoration of the Magi and the Assumption of the Virgin.<sup>1</sup> At a later period the clergy introduced dramatic representations with a similar view, and in these they taught the grotesque theology of the time—the descent of Christ into hell, and his fierce combat

<sup>1</sup> Pope Gregory the Great, in an epistle to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, says—"Images and pictures are put in churches that they who are not able to read may see upon the walls what they cannot learn from books." See Jortin's "Remarks," vol. iii. p. 47.

Bede, in his "Life of Benedict Biscop," tells us that when he returned from his pilgrimage to Rome, A.D. 648, he brought with him paintings of sacred subjects, more especially representations of the Gospel histories, and placed them in his church at Jarrow, "so that all who entered, even those ignorant of letters, might call to mind the grace of the incarnation."

with the devil on his own ground, being one of the favourite subjects. Such strange developments did the service of the Church exhibit! And yet they always had a relation to the Church's surroundings.

I have said enough to show that there has been unceasing development in the organisation and institutions of the Church; that the Church was from the very first a living organism, with vast capacities of growth, and, accordingly, that it has grown, and is growing, and will grow, its growth being determined to a large extent by its intellectual, moral, and religious surroundings. Divine in its origin, it has been human in its uses and its subjection to historic laws. Rising, like a mountain stream, high up on the hills of holiness, it has descended to the plain of terrestrial life, and there it flows on like a very river of God, clear as crystal when not contaminated by man's corruptions, and fertilising every country it laves in its wide meanderings.

I might show, if my plan admitted of it, that there has been as great development in the doctrines of the Church as in its organisation and institutions. But this would open up a wide field altogether beyond my present reach, and, besides, it has already been trodden by many eminent historical theologians, and notably by Cardinal Newman,<sup>1</sup> the advocate of religious development, and, at the same time, the

<sup>1</sup> See "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine."

most skilful apologist of a Church which claims to be immutable. The entire Christian doctrine, he contends, existed from the first, but it required long ages, and the exercise of many minds, to discover its hidden meanings, to see it in all its fulness, or, in other words, to develop it, in human apprehension, to the utmost. It took upwards of four hundred years before the Church could determine which, out of the many sacred writings then in existence, were inspired and which were not. It was not till the Council of Nice that the Homoousian doctrine was determined and defined. It was not till the Council of Chalcedon that the doctrine of the two natures in the one person of Christ was made an article of faith. It was not till the days of Augustine that the doctrine of original sin was fully developed and formulated.<sup>1</sup> In like manner the Cardinal, of course, holds that the still more latent doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Infallibility of the Pope—"mysteries which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God,"—had been developed in the ecclesiastical intelligence in his own day and made known to the Church. Thus he maintains that the Church contained the sum total of all religious truth from the first, and that it may go on developing that truth to the end of time.

No doubt the laws of God in the moral and spiritual, as well as in the material world, have

<sup>1</sup> See "Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine," chap. iv.

existed from a past eternity, and these are being slowly discovered one after the other, and this progress of discovery will go on for ever. The only question is whether the Immaculate Conception and the Infallibility of the Pope are to be ranked as the discoveries of facts or laws in the spiritual sphere, or whether they are not to be regarded as analogous to Descartes' discovery of vortices, or Leibnitz's discovery of a pre-established harmony between mind and matter. But we must hold our hand and proceed no farther in this direction.

Herbert Spencer's law of evolution is that the material universe is proceeding from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity. The history of the Church has been, to some extent, an illustration of this law. At first, a microscopic, almost structureless mass, but with a divine life in it and infinite possibilities before it, it has gradually become what it now is. Through the long centuries there has grown up out of a rudimentary a very complex organisation, dividing and branching out in the most heterogeneous fashion. Institutions so simple as an initiatory bath and a friendly supper have become awful mysteries, enclosing the sacerdotalism and sacrificialism of both the Hebrew and the Heathen temples. Vague ideas have developed into well-defined doctrines. Church systems, creeds, liturgies have all taken shape, with less or more specialisation of structure and function. The inchoate

meetings of apostolic days are now represented by all the great Churches of Christendom, with their nicely-adjusted constitutions. The unformulated teaching of the Gospels is now represented by the Canons of the Council of Trent, the Augsburg Confession, the Westminster Confession, the Thirty-nine Articles, and all the other creeds and confessions of the Christian world.

But the Church as it now exists, in its entirety and its essence, is the Church of Christ—the Church of the Apostles, of the Martyrs, of the Popes, of the Reformers. The thread of its existence has never been broken. Notwithstanding all its changes, the identity of the Church of the nineteenth century with that of the first cannot be denied. Like those great cathedrals which lift themselves up above every other building in the city and endure from century to century, while the frailer fabrics around them are falling into ruins, the Church rises above every other European institution, and has remained unshaken while empires and republics have risen and decayed. The Church is itself the highest evidence of the divine power of Christianity, the noblest monument to the divine teaching of its Founder.

Who will sum up the blessings which the Church in all its developments, and in all its branches, has bestowed upon the world? It has indeed been the salt of the earth, the life and the light of men.



Through all the political and secular history of the last eighteen hundred years we can trace it, as seamen can trace the great Gulf Stream in the midst of the ocean—the river in the sea—bringing the warmth of tropical climes to countries which had otherwise been bound up in eternal ice, welling with the tide up every estuary and creek and stream, and diffusing fertility, gladness, and life where otherwise all would be barrenness and death.

THE END.



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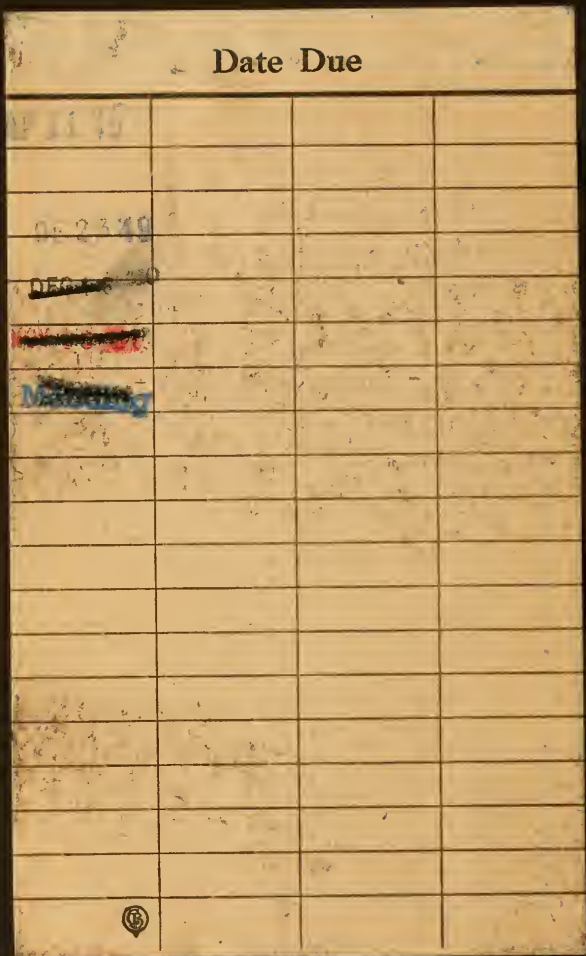
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